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SOME FEATURES
OF
THE FAITH

JOHN ARTHUR SHAW, M. A.

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SOME FEATURES OF THE FAITH

A POPULAR DISCUSSION
OF CERTAIN CARDINAL POINTS
OF CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE

BY

JOHN ARTHUR SHAW, M.A.

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World," "Choosing a Bishop," etc.

*"God be merciful unto us, and bless us: and
shew us the light of His countenance, and be mer-
ciful unto us:*

*"That Thy way may be known upon earth:
Thy saving health among all nations.*

*"Let the people praise Thee, O God; yea, let
all the people praise Thee."*

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To the Memory
of
MY DEAR MOTHER
This Book is
Affectionately Dedicated

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SOME FEATURES OF THE FAITH.

CHAPTER I.

GOD—(THE THEISTIC POSITION) FROM THE CHURCH'S POINT OF VIEW.

§ 1.

TO PROVE the existence of God, forms no part of the design of the present undertaking.

We may, however, not unprofitably glance for a moment beyond the borders of faith, and endeavor to discover the actual position of the hostile camp.

The work of proclaiming the blessed verities of Christian Theism through the instrumentality of dry reasoning, can derive but little encouragement from the history of past efforts in this direction. Those who have ably stood forth in defence of the faith, against unbelief, tell us that their books have, for the most part, been left unread by

those for whom they were specially written, and that even their public oral presentations of our case have failed to attract those who openly oppose the Christian position.

That so little good should arise from reasoning out our faith before those who disavow it, when we receive the courtesy of their attention, is not so wonderful as might at first sight appear; for while we may, perhaps, not unreasonably expect that the due treatment of Christianity should secure its triumph in any competition with such claims as infidelity can lay to our confidence; yet defeat in argument is not a very winning kind of introduction to anything, however desirable.

The small results of apologetic labors, as regards converts to our side, is otherwise accounted for when we remember how poor and how uninviting a thing the religion of Christ (which is the phase of Theism with which we are concerned) is, when its full life is sought to be infused into the very inadequate corporeity of language.

It is a patent impossibility to put our holy religion on paper.

Language, the most forceful and lucid, can never be Christianity; and therefore the honest sceptic, even if he devote himself studiously to the

work of reading our apologists in order to gain a knowledge of our religion, can never realize through the imperfect medium of words, a conception which at every point transcends, evades, and overtakes the capacities of discourse.

The very name by which Christians are divinely taught to address God, may serve in a humble way to illustrate this.

To sons only is it given to understand the fullness of meaning which that word "Father" conveys to those who are privileged to use it. Imagine anyone who, either by a strange misfortune, or by deliberately tearing out of his nature all trace of it, is utterly wanting in the faintest sense of what a father is to a son—imagine this difficult thing—and we may well despair of giving any proper notion of the matter to such an one, especially if we are restricted to the slender possibilities of description.

§ 2.

But even the closest and most intimate observation of the bearing of worthy fathers towards their children will not compass for an onlooker, that unique and incommunicable knowledge of a parent which belongs exclusively to sons and daughters.

And thus it is with God in religion. We are not permitted to know Him speculatively. We

must rather become as little children—begin where we ought to have begun at first. We must be actually born again into His family, and have the consciousness of this high sonship woven into the warp and woof of our being, and thus be transformed into a proper fitness attaining rightly to the great truth of Theism—that God is.

From the poverty of the conception of God which is acquired in any other way, we may perhaps judge that God never designed that He should be made known to any great extent by carefully wrought out, worded demonstrations of His existence.*

The Church's way secures a duly reverent approach to the Divine Presence, and prevents the idle presumptuous gaze of unadoring spectators, in effecting which, the Church acts as friend to the world.

* Note A.

CHAPTER II.

THE CREATION (GENESIS OF MAN).

§ 3.

THE MIND of man has in all ages tried of its own strength to fathom the mystery of man's origin. It has again and again produced brilliant theories, but they have satisfied no one. The human heart does not readily surrender to a theory, which after all, is only one of many theories.

Authoritative assertion is necessary. Philosophy does not possess this; and Science, the only human thing that can possibly wear anything like authority, after achieving much that is most useful to religion, learnedly confesses its failure.

It is through Revelation alone, that we get any information on the subject; and the character of that information is in every way becoming to its high source.

It is no theory. Nor is it that kind of authority which we are accustomed to see bolstered up

by elaborate defences. It is the calm assertion of fact; which without ado of any kind, without any armed preparation against gainsaying, breaks on the mind like the sun upon the morning—"God created man in His own Image; in the Image of God created He him."*

§ 4.

In the inspired account man occupies a dignified position between the realm of created existences on the one hand, and God on the other; between creation and the Creator. If we undertake to examine man as we should analyze any of the creatures over which he is placed as ruler, we shall find that we come upon something in his nature, for which all the rest of creation provides us with no canon, and of which we shall have no means of measurement or comparison. He is, indeed, "a limb of the great body of nature unwinding himself from out of the swaddling bands of the natural life, and subject to the natural laws for the development of his species,"† but this does not outline his whole being. He is something more than this; something there is in him which plainly overruns these limits, evincing his fitness for that rulership to which he is called, and for the noble office of reflecting God to the eye of all crea-

* Note B. † Martensen.

tures below him—all of which Holy Scripture means when it predicates of him that he is “made in the Image of God.”

Man stands forth before all created beings as their noblest and fairest type. This he has on his bodily side; but it is not this which receives or can receive the gift of likeness to God. A creature—the highest and most complete of all creatures—has impressed upon it, and breathed into it a something which bestows rank and fitness for a life that is more than creaturely. Man is a spirit as well as an animal, and in this spirit which God breathed into the animal form of man, lie all those rich possibilities which constitute his peculiar dignity.

§ 5.

This life is free in the highest sense, but the highest sense is not the absolute. Absolute freedom from our present point of view, without anything more being said of it, might suggest the most eccentric and even dangerous course, like that of a ship in mid-ocean, and under full sail, without pilot or rudder. This is not the freedom that Adam realized in the first flush of self-consciousness. His sense of freedom was that which consisted exquisitely with the genius of his being. As

a rational being, conscious of the source from which he sprung, he was also a religious being, and conscience in him gave direction to both reason and freedom.

We may perhaps be assisted in understanding the character of this freedom, which, though conditioned, is nevertheless really unrestricted, by conceiving the liberty that belongs to a welcome guest in the most hospitable of mansions. The restraints that lie upon him, he in no way feels to be a curtailment of freedom, such as his nature would or could understand it. In Adam there was no sense of withdrawal of scope for the full play of his whole nature. Freedom, true and real, was his; freedom which, as we have said, accorded perfectly with his composite nature; for as he was at once the summit and climax of all created life, and the inbreathed commencement of Godhood, his independence of the universe below him was assured to him only through his dependence upon his Creator above him.

It was his to be the free, intelligent, sympathetic medium for the transmission of the holy will of God to the universe. He was invited by his position and the whole structure of his being, to merge his independence in a filial dependence on God, "and to raise his life in the world into a life in God."

§ 6.

We are not to look upon Adam in his state of innocence as being perfect. Those matured excellences, those clear discernments of right and good, those natural movements in holiness, acquired by long practice, can hardly be attributed to the first man. It were more strictly accurate to conceive him, instead of being perfect actually, rather as being perfectly equipped for the glorious development that lay open to him.

A state of innocence is not the same as a state of perfection. Our Blessed Lord's character is by no means exhaustively set forth when we describe Him as having lived a life of blamelessness and innocence. No such life of negative virtue could ever revolutionize a world, and "draw all men unto" itself. Innocence and sanctity are not one and the same thing. Paradise, and the first Adam, to us who know the Second Adam, and the Kingdom of God, are therefore properly understood only when we represent the matter to ourselves as the entrance on a career—as the standing on the threshold of a godward development, fully equipped for the high achievement of perfection as our "Father in Heaven is perfect."

§ 7.

In our private devotional reading of Holy

Scripture we may have found some difficulty in obtaining an altogether satisfactory idea of the number of elements of which human nature is composed. Scripture represents it sometimes as made up of two parts, and at other times it would seem to speak of three.

Body and spirit, as we have seen, both exist in man; but whether the soul is really a third element, distinct from these two, it is not the matter of a mere moment to determine.

St. Paul in writing to the Thessalonians uses these words (Chap. v. 23): "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly, and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." And in the Epistle to the Hebrews, the writer seems to mark out with even more distinctness of outline, the difference between spirit and soul, and therefore to suggest their separate existences. The passage from Hebrews is: "For the word of God is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow," etc.

On the strength of these passages much has been done to elucidate this tripartite division of our nature. Whole hosts of thoughts are said to

cluster round the adjectives derived from each word respectively. "Spiritual things" are shown to be in evident contrast with "soul things." The soul, it is said, is the bond of union between the spirit and the body, with a strong tendency, however, to exhibit a closer sympathy with the body than with the spirit. As the centre of the passions and desires which we have in common with the brutes (although in us it is not uninfluenced by the elevating energy of the spirit), the soul gravitates naturally downward.

In this way the nature of man is divided into three parts, distinct and essential.

There is, however, something not wholly satisfactory about this labored defining. One cannot help feeling that Theology has here been put under too great an obligation to the philosophy of Plato. Very little encouragement is given to this conception of the soul from the forty-second chapter of Isaiah, which St. Matthew quotes thus, as spoken by God: "Behold My servant whom I have chosen, My beloved in whom My Soul is well pleased." Here the contention of the soul's position as hovering between spirit and body, with affinities more closely allied to the body, is overthrown; for no such description can apply to the nature of God. It cannot be concluded from these

two passages, says Canon Liddon, that man consists of three essentially distinct elements.

"If the language of St. Paul obliges us to see in soul and spirit, something more than two distinct relations of man's inward nature, it does not imply more than two distinct departments of that nature—the higher region of self-conscious spirit and self-determining will which belongs to man as man; and the lower region of appetite, perception, imagination, memory, which in the main is common to the undying soul of man, and the perishable inmost being of the brute.

"Man's soul is not a third nature poised between his spirit and his body; nor yet is it a sublimate of his bodily organization, any more than his body is a precipitate of his soul.

"It is the outer clothing of the spirit, one with it in essence, yet distinct in functions; the centre of man's life, physical and animal, is his spirit."*

This seems to be a clear, plain setting forth of man's dual nature, and one which loses nothing of its cogency by a reference to our Blessed Lord's utterances bearing upon the subject, *e.g.*, "The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak," and again, when resigning His human soul into His Father's hands, He says, "Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit."

* *Some Elements of Religion.*

§ 8.

In looking into the subject of the genesis of man, we are here led to notice a matter which, however, has not as much interest for the minds of to-day as it seems to have possessed for those of former ages. The theory of the pre-existence of souls, which has it that each of us (that is, our inner spiritual being) has occupied other bodies than that which he now wears, and that we shall continue to animate and dwell in others still, in the future, until by a course of exalted virtue we set ourselves free from this enthrallment—all this is an idea which sprang into existence in the fertile mind of the East. Later on it was embodied and set forth prominently in the philosophy of Plato, and appears to have attracted enough attention in the Christian world of the early centuries to have been mentioned, although only to receive its condemnation as an unscriptural error, at the first Council of Constantinople.

That the soul existed before the body of man, is of course a doctrine directly opposed to the teaching of Holy Scripture; wherein it is plainly stated that "God created man in His own image"; and as the soul or spirit is, as we have seen, the part of man's two-fold nature which is alone capable of reflecting that Divine image, we cannot

escape from the plain sense of the inspired words, that the breathing by the Almighty into the nostrils of the body which He had prepared ("and the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul"), was the creation of the soul.

If other evidence of the untenableness of this notion be necessary, we have it abundantly in the great fact of the Resurrection, where our Blessed Lord as exemplar, triumphantly proves the indissoluble union of body and soul, not only in this world, but in the risen life beyond the grave. The resurrection of Christ, who is our Second Adam, establishes it as a glorious fact, that the body, so far from being but a garment-like covering for the soul, and one which is to be abandoned sooner or later for another similar vesture, is itself *as immortal as the soul*. Though this doctrine of the pre-existence of souls does not belong properly to the work we have in hand, it is nevertheless, perhaps as well to have it before us in the exact light in which the Church regards it, in order that it may serve to arrest all vagaries in that direction; for nearly everybody has at one time or another entertained himself with some such dreams.

§ 9.

From this question we advance naturally to another somewhat akin to it, and which, too, after having occupied to a large extent the studies of Christian thinkers in the past, has lost much of the keen edge of interest for us of to-day.

That any true part, however small, of Christianity, should lose its interest for Christians in any age, is doubtless a fault, not in the thing itself, but in those who are capable of slighting it.

But this matter—as to whether Adam in begetting children transmitted to them a soul as well as a body—is just one of those numerous queries which lie on the border-land between warrantable inquiry, and overdrawn speculation: between what is healthfully and reverently within our reach, and, what Bishop Butler well and gently calls, a “speculation for which we have no talent.”

If this subject in its essence lies, as perhaps it does, on the right side of the line, it has lost in our eyes something of its real value and importance, from the fact that it has rarely been discussed on its own intrinsic merits; but has nearly always been brought in as an auxiliary to establish some favorite doctrine; and thus those who treat it are strongly committed, as a rule, to a side, and unfitted to be its impartial judges. This in all fair-

ness must be allowed to describe Tertullian's great treatment of the subject; and, later on, St. Augustine's—the one grasping at it as a bulwark against the heresy of a pre-existing soul, as taught by Marcion; the other using it as a crushing argument against the Pelagian heresy—the denial of the Church's doctrine of Original Sin.

That God made our first parents, body and soul, by so complete an act of creation that they possessed within themselves the power to reproduce themselves, body and soul, in their offspring—is the doctrine or side of this subject, known amongst theologians by the name of Traducianism. The opposite view to this is called Creatianism; and teaches that, whereas the body is subject to the law of the propagation of species, and is transmitted by generation from parents to children, the soul of every child owes its existence to a direct, special act of the Creator, forming an absolutely new manifestation of the Divine will.

§ 10.

Each of these two conflicting views springs from contemplating man from but a single side of his dual nature. Traducianism sees only the animal in man, and goes altogether on animal analogies; while Creatianism regards him as a spirit

exclusively. And as it is contrary to the true conception of spirit nature to imagine it as subject to the gross law of animal reproduction, it asserts that nothing less than a particular and special creative act of God, can bring an immortal spirit into being.

Now it cannot need much demonstration to satisfy us that any onesided view of our nature is wrong; and wrong in the specious, dangerous way in which half-truths always err. It would be well if we could always have this friendly hint present to our minds; if those of us who know it to-day would but remember it to-morrow; for in all the wide range of religion and theology, there is not, and has not been, a more fertile source of confusion and disputation.

The solution of the difficulty presented by these two opposing views, is only satisfactorily effected by uniting them.

As an animal, though the highest, noblest, and most perfect of all animals, every child is dependent upon its parents for, and owes to its parents its physical being. As a spirit, and the God-nature in miniature and actual commencement, every child is indebted to God alone, the Father of spirits, for its imperishable soul: while as a person—the union of both—these essential ele-

ments interact upon, and influence each other, in a manner quite beyond our ken or subtlest power of setting forth.

Notwithstanding the fact that Traducianism savors so much of animalism, and goes so perilously near to Deism (which conceives of God as having taken no part in any feature of creation or providence since He first launched the universe into being), it yet has, as a theory, a dignity which comes to it from the association of great, even the greatest names both in ancient and modern times.

§ 11.

But of the two views, judged separately, Creationism not only seems to be more in accordance with the limited grounds Holy Scripture affords for the settlement of the matter, but has always been favored by the vast majority of the Christians of all ages.

Th objections urged against it are not very convincing. That it contradicts what the Word of God states concerning God's rest after the series of creative acts recorded in the first chapter of Genesis; and that it undermines the teaching of the Sabbath, is sufficiently combatted and nullified, by the universal fixed belief of Christians, in the daily providence of God, for which, the petition in

the Lord's Prayer—"Give us this day our daily bread"—supplies the surest kind of warranty. Besides, it is clearly proved, that since the creation of the world and of man, altogether new species of animals have come into existence, showing that the Creator has not withheld His hand from even this lower sphere of activity.

As to the objection, that according to Creatianism, the adulterer's act, in opposition to the Divine will and commandment, obliges God to create an immortal soul; it is acknowledged that this is, without controversy, a startling feature of the sin of unchastity, and yet even this sin could not be committed except by God's permission. Permitting sin in any form or degree to exist, it is not inconceivable that the Almighty should, now and then, as here, show us the enormity of the draft it makes upon Divine patience.

§ 12.

It is also said against Creatianism, that since it makes each soul to be a separate, distinct and altogether new manifestation of the Divine will—
—fresh creation from the hands of God—it offends against the Catholic doctrine of Original Sin; or else, if it do not, it is guilty of the graver offence of attributing to God the creation of a thing in

itself essentially sinful. But the Church's teaching of Original Sin does not encourage the notion that the soul is an unsympathetic tenant of the body, or that it is uninfluenced by the body. The soul may, indeed, be a clear ray of light, so to speak, proceeding from the throne of God, but it may have blended with it a tint emanating from its physical organism, a shade which past history can possibly explain, and which colors all objects, more or less, that are presented to it.

Adam, as he stood forth from the creating hand of God, though possessing unbiased freedom to proceed along his course of Godward development, took the momentous step in the opposite direction, which destroyed the original relationship existing between soul and body, and gave to the latter a prominence and a force that did not belong to it, thus destroying the Divine adjustment of the component parts of man's nature.

If Adam then, under the fairest circumstances and without a single discord ringing in his being, was overcome by the lower of the two principles (called by theologians the Cosmical and the Spiritual) that should have maintained their holy and proper balance in him; how shall any child of Adam, inheriting a nature in which this downward tendency is propagated, give promise of better

things? And, failing thus to give such promise, shall we lay the blame impiously upon the Creator?

It is the defect of the due subordination of the lower to the higher phase of our nature, the wrench which Adam's fatal act gave to the balanced mechanism of our being—the adjustment by our first parents, as opposed to the adjustment effected by God—which makes every child born into the world so unworthy of the Creatorship and Fatherhood of God. This is the Church's doctrine of Original Sin, and this is not impaired by the showing of Creatianism; for neither the soul nor the body is of itself the man. Nothing less than the union of both makes the person, the man; and in this unity, this person, the defect lies.

Each *person* is thus, at birth, defective; and incapable, in a way that Adam himself was not originally incapable, of attaining to his destined goal. But this blight does not at first sully the soul. It hampers and thwarts it, and only gradually overcomes it. The new-created, uninherited part may therefore, at birth, be stainless; and yet at the same time the sum of the parts—the person—may be a thing of sin.

§ 13.

If it is permitted us to reverently seek for God's reasons for creating man, it may be said

without undue pretensions to knowledge of so high a matter, that it is contrary to His nature to be alone. He would have about Him, admitted to His presence, and blest by a promise of union with Himself, those fitted to appreciate His acts, and to copy them (the most robust praise) to the limits of their powers. Here is the *raison d'être* for man's existence—this and the prospect of our progressive felicity—a reason and purpose in keeping with His own revelation of Himself to us, with the unfailing providences of nature in their prodigal ministry to human wants, and with the invitation to which all that is sound and good within us responds, to make our home (even while our feet rest on this green earth) in the very bosom of God.

CHAPTER III.

THE FALL.

§ 14.

WE SHALL expend no time in trying to fathom the mystery of the origin of evil; nor spin any web of speculation over the blank void which here meets us.

There are not wanting many such ingenuities, but they only serve to make our ignorance the more apparent. The silence of Holy Scripture on this subject is voiceful enough to those who are in earnest. It brings home to the souls of devoutly inquiring men, the fact that this knowledge would be but a useless encumbrance, serving only to divert our attention from its one legitimate object, which is, not the origin of, but the remedy for evil.

It requires but a glance at the Word of God to see that it is composed of no promiscuous heap of knowledge aimlessly thrown together. A grand design is discernible in it, which is all the more

forcibly impressed upon the reader of the Bible, by the striking absence of other order, and of all literary form.

That design, which nobody can fail to notice, is a great evidence of the Divineness of the Bible.

Into that design, however, enlightenment as to the genesis of evil does not enter; and no one who possesses any just conception of the true character and office of Holy Scripture, can help feeling, that if it did so enter, such enlightenment would be a lamentable declension from the true attitude of a revelation from God the Father to His lost, sinful children; an unaccountable turning aside of the compass-needle of inspiration; and a veritable *bathos*, expressive more of human than of Divine workmanship. When we see, as we cannot help seeing, the significance that is to be attached to the silence of Holy Scripture regarding the entrance of evil into the world, it is surely an undertaking marked by no conspicuous prudence, to attempt, with the history of past efforts before us, to construct any tower of Babel, with which to supplement the imperfect fulfilment of Holy Writ.

The fall of man is so tremendous a fact, and so thoroughly endorsed by all human experience, that man, alive to his true interests, can hardly be thought so wanting in seriousness as to waste

his fleeting time in continuous and hopeless guesses as to how this dread reality could have had its commencement.

All wise and telling investigation begins with the existence of evil. This is the starting point of the Scriptures themselves; and without going any further back, the distance from this point to our true goal is sufficiently great for our allotted three-score-years-and-ten to compass.

Men lost in a mine or other subterranean passage had better (and in any rational, respectful conception of them they would) lose no time in wild speculating on the probable causes of the surrounding and perilous darkness, but would turn their whole attention in the direction from which they hoped for a ray of light, and the promise of rescue.*

§ 15.

We have seen that Adam in Paradise was not endowed with a perfection, attained, as it must have been if possessed, without any effort on his part. A perfection thus unwon, would have left him no race to run, no development to achieve; hardly would it have left him the power of voluntary obedience. The real perfection which we must attribute to him was one, not of attainment,

* Note C.

but of equipment. In a word, instead of being endowed with perfection, he was given the wherewithal to attain that perfection.

He stood only on the threshold of his career. Paradise was Paradise by reason of the large possibilities which it unbosomed to our first parents. God gave to man the gift of existence—humanity in a rudimentary condition—not in a state of completeness. The ideal of man is not satisfied by conceiving of him as merely holding on to life, retaining a foothold in Paradise. Something is to be achieved. Life is a talent committed to him of which he must make the most. His destiny and full glory are not present things. Adam's is not the rounded maturity of the full-grown oak, but rather the inspiring promise of this, which lies in the acorn, if an illustration from the world of nature may be used of the soul.

Entering on existence with a nature duly balanced between heaven and earth—between the spiritual and the natural—man's course lies onward and upward, where along the path of holy obedience his true goal is reached.

But the heavy attribute of free-will makes the opposite to this also possible. Adam may move either forward or backward, towards God or towards the mere animal, for he is a compound of

both. It is possible for him, like Christ, so to live as to (see Appendix 4) spiritualize his body, and exalt it into the sphere of spirits; and it is also possible for him so to live as to degrade and debase his complex nature into a rivalry of the brutes. Of these two courses, the one is a true and normal, the other an abnormal and false development. The divine plan, upon which Adam was formed, laid down every detail of preparation necessary for his life purpose; but to put all this into motion, is the part left for man's own proper act.

The two factors—God and the animal—are not more truly present in man, than is the consciousness of the two aspects of his position which these offer to him. On the one hand, all is God, God the source and God the end of all things; and man is but as a mote in the universal sunshine, though a mote consciously akin to that space-filling Presence. While there is present glory for man here in his sense of affinity with God, the contrast between the immensity of God and the infinitesimal littleness of man, makes man's true attitude, even though he is buoyed with the hope of fuller, richer, more abundant life, an attitude of humility.

Growth (and it would seem that as long as there is anything material in man this must be the

law which governs him), orderly growth, is the process by which glory is presented to man; attainment only through a course of ever-increasing development. For it is necessary that man, to be the ruler of all created existences, should first learn to govern himself.

§ 16.

On the other hand, the prospect shows man as himself supreme, and all creatures doing him homage; a monarch, indeed, and such by Divine right. Nothing is there in his wide realm with which he may stoop to confer. Everything about him proclaims its inferiority to himself. On every hand throughout the ample extent of his empire, all that meets his eye, speaks by flattering contrast of his own exaltation. All Creation seems united in a deep conspiracy to swell the glory of human sovereignty.

Between these two spheres, therefore, man is called to hold his even, righteous way. There is much need for caution. Dependency in the spiritual world balances supremacy over all flesh. Such is the double aspect without, which corresponds with the dual impulse of man within. And such is man as made in the image of God, that he can behold this two-sided picture without sin, the contemplation of which has not the nature of sin;

for the due harmonious relationship of these spheres, the one to the other, is what a fitted man with faculties adequately to perpetuate.

But contemplation is not sufficient of itself to effect man's free self-development.

This peerless being must be brought within the range of temptation. "And the Lord God commanded the man saying, of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil thou shalt not eat of it, for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die" (Gen. ii. 16-17).

§ 17.

And now appears on the scene that mysterious being, the serpent, whom St. John identifies with the Devil (Rev. xii. 9). The work of this evil one is begun by first insinuating doubt—"Yea hath God said?" and "Ye shall not surely die," as preparatory to the masterstroke which immediately follows in that very deadly form which falsehood may be made to wear—an overstatement: "Ye shall be as gods," that is, ye shall attain to the highest pitch and perfection of your development, by a shorter route than that of waiting through a tedious, indefinite period for it. How much more seemly that the sublime ruler of

the earth and all that is therein, should not be forced to undergo the same natural, maturing process which is common to the lowest forms of life, but should thus spring at one bound into unapproachable supremacy—into deity! This expansion of the brief, succinct account of the temptation given in Genesis, with the first Adam as the central figure, shows it strictly analogous to the temptation offered to our Lord (the second Adam) in the wilderness. “Again the Devil taketh Him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth Him all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them, and saith unto Him, All these things will I give Thee, if Thou wilt fall down and worship me” (Matt. iv. 8, 9). In both cases the attack was made at the outset of the career. In both cases the temptation is to anticipate and overreach the legitimate process of attainment—to grasp at the prize before the race is begun—and to hold it in the Devil’s name, or, failing this, in man’s own or any name, but not to hold it of God.

To have perceived, to have appreciated, assimilated, and made his own, the supreme, beneficent will of the Creator, was for Adam to have put all the noble energies of his new being into fresh play, and to have succeeded. This he did not do; but with his commission fresh upon him to subdue

the world, permitted himself to be subdued by the world. Created, as we have said, with a nature compounded of kinship with the world beneath him, and with God above him, the normal course of his activity lay in his being to the world what God was to him; in a word, in his being himself, with his uncreated part dominating the world-sympathies within him.

§ 18.

All that we can make of the rest, the process by which this awful step was determined, is that Eve, overpowered by that mysterious being, the serpent, threw the full vast weight of her captive reason into the scales, along with Adam's own temptation towards absolute rulership (lyingly offered); and thus was effected the overthrow of God's image in man.

The inspired story of man's fall, relating as it does to that dim verge between what we *can* know, and what we cannot quite grasp or have adequate realization of, fittingly presents its weighty facts softened down to our capacity by an instructive symbolism.

Of this symbolism, the fruit of the forbidden tree, the fruit which Adam ate, thus signifies the attractiveness of the world in its false independ-

ence of God, *the desirable* presenting itself to man, without any mention of whence it comes, or of the hand that bestows it; without any reference or acknowledgment to God.

§ 19.

Bodily hunger was not the impelling force which urged Adam to his impious act.

The fair, flattering promise which the fruit, and the interpretation put upon it by the serpent, gave to the part of Adam's nature most susceptible to such seduction, namely, "to be as gods,"—supreme rulership in his own right—this was the true cause.

The figure of eating shows that "the knowledge of good and evil" signifies more than the comprehension of the fact that good has its opposite.

A figure which embodied, for example, the act of looking, would have been strong enough for this; but "eating" emphatically means appropriation, the taking into the system of the thing, here the experiencing of the evil.

To have had the knowledge of good and evil as an intellectual parallel to the consciousness of the difference between the meanings of the words black and white, was not to have forfeited Par-

adise. But to have voluntarily cast away the Godward prospect, the first, too, that gave impress to nascent humanity, and gave it on the warranty of omnipotence; and to have filled the void thus made with a foreign, unattested hope; to have destroyed the bridge which the Almighty's own hands had reared, and by which created existence was to pass over into God; and in its stead to have trusted his weight, and thereby the destiny of the generations of all time to the airy fabric of a lie—this constituted Adam's fall.

Seduced, man certainly was, and with stupendous guile; the less reasoning woman first lured over, and then become a propagandist of the new thing, not immediately to the righteous judgment of the man, but by her very nature, mediate, through his affections, she, the least likely of all possible agents to arouse suspicion (for she was God's gift), leads, herself first led, man to his undoing.

§ 20.

Yet when all this has been said, the great fact remains that Adam was consciously, willingly seduced, and therein lay his sin.

The sin of our first parents, although unparalleled, yet since it was of the nature of a seduction, was regarded with full cognizance of this aspect

by our Blessed Lord and Redeemer, as shown in His ever present compassion for our sin-laden nature. "And when He was come near, He beheld the city and wept over it." Are we not permitted to notice this, too, in the absence of questions put to the sinful afflicted, and in the enfolding of the more and the less unworthy sufferers in one magnanimous sympathy? All this has been well gathered and nobly uttered by the poet:

"God the Father:—

" . . . They themselves ordained their fall
The first sort by their own suggestion fell,
Self-tempted, self-depraved; Man falls deceived
By the other first; man therefore shall find grace,
The other none:

"God the Son:—

" . . . For should Man finally be lost? Should Man
Thy creature late so lov'd, Thy youngest son
Fall circumvented thus by fraud, though joined
With his own folly?

"God the Father:—

" . . . Man shall not quite be lost, but saved who will;
Yet not of will in him, but grace in Me
Freely vouchsaf't. Once more I will renew
His lapsed power, though forfeit and enthral'd
By sin to foul, exorbitant desires:
Upheld by Me yet once more he shall stand
On even ground against his mortal foe;
By Me upheld, that he may know how frail
His fall'n condition is, and to Me owe
All his deliv'rance, and to none but Me."*

Though the mercy of God recognizes this feature of the case, it can only be to fan religious hope in our breasts. No healthy mind can ever be in-

* Milton.

duced to soften down the inherent malignancy of an offence, which nothing less than the life-blood of incarnate God could make right.

§ 21.

The way in which the generations of all time and we individually are affected by this transgression, is a matter of the first moment.

A popular conception of man's fall in the person of Adam, as it regards each and every member of the race, is that we, collectively and personally, are held accountable for Adam's sin.

Though there is something on the face of it unsatisfactory in this idea, yet it is to be feared it is but too generally believed that Adam's awful act is imputed to us, each and all. There are but two ways, neither of them creditable, in which such a notion may maintain its existence amongst us, and propagate itself: the one by a misconception of the nature and attributes of God, such as could represent Him as all powerful and therefore above and indifferent to the law of righteousness; the other, by an intellectual and spiritual negligence, which has never given the matter thought sufficient to settle the difficulty, not enough thought perhaps to reveal the fact that there is any difficulty in the acceptance of this figment.

Here let us lay bare the very real difficulty, as it lies all unsettled in the mind of the ordinary church-goer.

That away, far back in the dim distance of time, across the wide chasm of thousands of years, a man, the first of the race—a kind of remote ancestor of ours—committed a sin; and that we of to-day, men and women seeking to straighten out our eternal accounts with our God and Creator, have not only to answer for our own evil deeds, numerous as they are, but have also to confess, to feel bowed down under, and to seek pardon for, this great, ancient wrong-doing of the first man (an offence, the temptation to which we never had any opportunity of resisting, and one whose commission we may even deeply deplore); this surely is a conception of Christian belief which it would be difficult to defend as being a representation of the justice of God, anything less than repugnant to the Holy Scriptures—"The fathers shall not be put to death for the children, neither shall the children be put to death for the fathers; every man shall be put to death for his own sin" (Deut. xxiv. 16; also II. Kings xiv. 6; Ezek. xviii. 20). It certainly forms no part of the teaching of the Church.

§ 22.

To impute an absent sin to us, to lay upon us guilt where there has been no sin, is plainly a thing that God in His righteousness cannot do. This, then, is not, and cannot be, the effect that reaches to us from the sin which lost Paradise to our first parents.

On the other hand, that the sin of Adam only hurt himself, and not all mankind; that infants new born are in the same state as Adam was before his fall; that a man may still be without sin before God, and keep God's Commandments to the letter if he will—this conception is so far from being unknown and untaught in our own times, that there are sects of religious people who make it almost their chief article of belief.

But notwithstanding the modern names of these religious societies, their distinctive doctrine is an ancient heresy, which was emphatically condemned by the undivided Church in Council as long ago as the early part of the fifth century.

§ 23.

A Briton named Morgan, known in the learned world by the Latin equivalent, Pelagius, and one Celestius, a Briton also, went forth from their own land at the dawn of the fifth century, as

preachers of this doctrine, and soon succeeded in disturbing the whole of Christendom. Rome, Africa, and Palestine were visited by the zealous missionaries. Africa, under the strong leadership of Augustine, Bishop of Hippo, repudiated the cold novelties, and the teachers were followed to Palestine, where they were arraigned before a synod of fourteen Bishops at Diospolis, the ancient Lydda. Here the clever, dialectic skill and learning of Pelagius, who alone understood both the language of his accusers and that of his judges, is said to have imposed upon the fathers and secured his acquittal. This trial, carried on as it must have been by the unsatisfactory means of interpreters, cannot be given much weight; but it opposed the judgment of the Bishops of the East to that of the Africans.

As a Western monk, Pelagius, it was discovered, was amenable to the Bishop of Rome, to whom it was agreed by the two Churches to leave the settlement.

Pope Innocent I. condemned Pelagius, and shortly afterward died. He was succeeded in the pontifical office by Zosimus.

Pope Zosimus, after due deliberation of this important matter, which was still at fever-heat, proceeded (strangely enough it would seem to us of this generation) to annul at a single blow, *ex*

cathedra, all the judgments of his predecessor, Innocent I., and absolved Pelagius and Celestius. A solemn review of the case was appointed in the Basilica of St. Clement.

The accusers of the two "persecuted" teachers were branded as vagabonds, sowers of strife and calumny, wherever they went. Zosimus went further, and crushed the opponents of Pelagius and his friend, by contrasting them with the unimpeachable personages, Pelagius and Celestius, whom they would injure. Africa and St. Augustine, however, still continued to vigorously arraign the new doctrines, and treat contemptuously the Pope's decree. Augustine's language was sufficiently politic to Zosimus, but yet it contained a plain charge of prevarication against the whole Roman clergy. Augustine now dropped argument and used force. He reached over the head of the Bishop or Pope of Rome, and drew to his aid the supreme earthly power.

The Emperor, as head of the State and of all it contained (the Church amongst the rest), decided the question against Pelagius in a law issued April 30th, 418, A. D.

A few days later, in May, the Council of Carthage was convened, when two hundred and twenty-three Bishops gave conciliar authority to the Emperor's decision. The dangerous heresi-

archs were condemned by name, in eight canons; and the law, without hearing or trial, inflicted banishment from Rome.

§ 24.

And now, we of to-day who are familiar with our own Manning's life-work, find ourselves anxious about the way Infallibility fared in this splendid trial of its reality. But, alas! for the majesty of the conception! Pope Zosimus proceeded at once to reverse all his own courageous decisions which condemned his predecessor, Innocent I., and once again, *ex cathedra*, delivered his pronouncement. But this time it was to anathematize Pelagius and Celestius, and to excommunicate them from the body of the faithful, if they did not "renounce and abjure the venomous tenets of their impious and abominable sect."

Thus the Holy Spirit, alone infallible, made truth to shine forth from amid human weakness and error.

Even Augustine, who, under God, was the chief cause of the triumph of truth against the errors of Pelagius, advanced to his grasp of this truth through a process of reasoning which we must decline to adopt.

Augustine was not content to assert Original Sin, in the strongest language, against Pelagius;

but did not scruple to dogmatize as to the mode of its transmission. This was by sexual intercourse, which, he asserts (in arguments which the modesty of our manners in this day will not permit us to discuss), would have been unknown but for the Fall; and was itself essentially evil, though an evil to be tolerated in the regenerate, for the procreation of children, themselves to be regenerate.

This great heathen, oriental principle of the inherent evil of matter, was the dominant and fundamental tenet of Gnosticism; it lay at the root of Arianism (the denial of the Saviour's Godhead), appeared later on as the remote parent of Nestorianism; and still produces in our own midst its harvest of emotional, body-contemning sects.

This was the primary axiom of all Monasticism, and so became almost imperceptibly the first recognized principle of all Roman theology.

§ 25.

Augustine, in this theory of the transmission of sin, betrays that invincible horror of the intrinsic evil of the material and corporeal, which had been infused into his mind by his youthful Manicheanism.

"Notwithstanding all his concessions on the dignity of marriage," says Dean Milman, "Augustine is in this respect an irreclaimable Man-

ichean." This is also in St. Augustine that basis of Traducianism to which reference has been made above.

With regard, then, to the manner in which the sin of Adam affects each of us, the Church has decided that the sin of Adam did not only hurt himself, but affected and affects all mankind.

That infants, new born, are not in the same state as Adam was before the Fall.

And that a man cannot be without sin if he but wills to be; and cannot possibly, without any help from God, keep all God's Commandments.

To establish this position we are not driven on the rocks of Augustinianism, or more properly Manicheanism.

CHAPTER IV.

ORIGINAL SIN.

§ 6.

WE HAVE already largely anticipated the subject of Original Sin when discussing the process by which the soul comes into existence. This was hardly avoidable, as the basis of the doctrine of Original Sin lies so deep, that it is bound up with the consideration of the very essence or essences of man's being.

As this fact led us to anticipate, when examining those elements of man's nature, so it now obliges us to return to that point.

It has been sufficiently shown that "Original Sin standeth not in the following of Adam as the Pelagians do vainly talk," which following only occurs, it is maintained, because we do not choose, as we might, to make our lives different.

We have also seen that sin is not inherent in matter; that it is not a substance; for Adam as he

walked through Eden, and Eve with her material frame taken out of Adam's fleshly body, were sinless beings.

It was possible for them, without taint of sin, even to look both ways from Paradise, and to realize their relationship to the world of matter over which they were divinely placed, as well as to glory in their life in the image of God. To question this, is to forget the human body of our sinless Redeemer, which He not only possessed while here on earth, but which, even now, He wears in Heaven. "Original Sin is thus neither a substance nor an accident," but, as Bishop Martensen says, "a false relation of existence." "By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned."

The initiatory act of sin, by which man fell, while not imputed to any but to Adam himself, affects us all nevertheless in a very real way.

How this can be is not so difficult to realize, as a hasty, superficial view of the matter might lead us to imagine. The first thing that we must do is to assure ourselves that our method of representing Adam to ourselves, is accurate and profound (for there is no danger of going too deep here). Otherwise the *unnatural* relationship

which exists between him and us may escape our scrutiny.

He was not simply "another man," or a remote ancestor. He was *all of us, in actual commencement*. He was the first man, and as such, was in himself also what has, through all the rolling centuries, become the human race.

Within his loins, we, all of us, lay in a germ state, of such sensitive plasticity as totally transcends all notions founded on experience.

Approaching this subject, as we must naturally do, with our minds stored with images taken from human knowledge and experience, we shall have to stem the strong current of inclination which we may feel to regard Adam as a transmitter of life already transmitted, in the sense of any ordinary ancestor's part in the chain of human existence, and to think that, as with an ordinary ancestor, time, and the introduction of new blood in the generations that have intervened between Adam and us, may possibly have entirely eliminated the flaw.

§ 27.

But this thought must give way to the true view, which sees in the first man, not a mere forefather, but the direct moulder of the cardinal features of the composite being of each one of us.

We may be assisted to this understanding of our relationship to Adam by conceiving the whole race of mankind throughout all the ages from the marriage of Adam to the present moment, as all crowded back again into the loins of Adam, *as possibilities*. Then, if Adam himself was, as has been shown, in an undetermined condition previous to his fall—a condition which awaited his first elective act—we cannot predicate of his yet untransmitted likenesses that they had attained a condition in advance of Adam himself. These, too, were in a state of undetermined formability. Had Adam been true to his original holy nature, and obeyed the godly, instead of a godless impulse, there can be no difficulty in believing that this, his first act, would have influenced his offspring accordingly.

But Adam, whose first momentous call to activity, was to hold, with due regard to each, his divinely established balance between the two spheres to which his dual nature bound him, voluntarily destroyed that balance, which it was beyond his supremest effort to restore; and therefore in begetting children, he transmitted to them *natures marred by this lost balance*. As the Scriptures express it, he begat sons (no longer after the image of God), but *in his own "image."*

Every human birth therefore signifies an entrance on a false development, a development not *to* but *from* God. The image of God, man's capacity of being to the world what God is to man, is lost; and therefore cannot be handed down by Adam. "As by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned."

The difficulty and unsatisfactoriness of the mind's attempt to associate sin with the new-born babe, is thus removed.

§ 28.

We can now stoop over the infant's cot, and notwithstanding all the attractiveness of the picture, and the "Heaven" that "lies about us in our infancy," we can even here realize the true nature of Original Sin, as being really a thing antecedent to any wilful act, and not necessarily dependent on any such act; but as being *a state*, a negative state, offensive to the all-holy eye of God. In this case, not what is present offends, but the absence, rather, of what ought to be present. What God hath joined together—humanity and the godward impulse—man hath here put asunder. The image of God is wanting. And in its place we find the image of man; man after the fall. The

tiny human compass, to our eye so perfect and beautiful, is, nevertheless, charged with a false polarity, and is thus errant from the first.

The difference between the infant and the man is only the difference between the bud and the flower. Both are identical in nature, and both are recognized as such in Holy Scripture.

CHAPTER V.

THE SAVIOUR.

§ 29.

WHAT then, is there for man? What does or can the future hold for him? Can what has been lost ever be recovered? This is the grand question. The answer is two-fold: it cannot, and it can. From the side of humanity, no effort can go forth, however sublime, which possesses the slightest promise of wresting back from fate this lost glory, for which the world is ever yearning, and yearning most, perhaps, amidst the fairest scenes of its own abundance.

“Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread, and your labor for that which satisfieth not?” asks the prophet Isaiah, and in asking, stamps the whole long Sisyphean enterprise of earth, in which generation after generation exhausts the flower of its strength in the chase after perfect happiness, as hopelessness itself.

There are many things which it lies in the awful power of man to do, but which, once done, constitute calamities with which humanity is not fitted to cope. And of all such calamities, we stand face to face with the greatest, and the dire original, in the Fall of man. To rise superior to this evil, it is not enough to say that the noblest achievements of man have come short.

It is not enough to say that, were the world to behold the spectacle of some lofty spirit, towering so far above the rest of our race as to exhaust by his individual merit the atoning capacity of human nature on our behalf, that this effort would miserably fail of success. The truth is only stated when we perceive, and acknowledge, that if every child of Adam, from the moment of the Fall down to the present, exerted the full strength of his inherited possibilities towards this desirable end, even this grand sum total could not possibly restore to us our lost estate, for "the stream cannot rise higher than its source."

§ 30.

On the other hand, if this condition incontestably circumscribes human might, we must not extend the limitation beyond our own sphere. No bounds must be set to the power of the Almighty.

It is possible, indeed, for the Power that first called order out of chaos, and formed man to be its governor, to again manifest omnipotence, and put forth an energy, outstripping in Divineness and majesty even that which produced Creation—an energy which should effect upon the ruins and ashes of human hope, a sure and certain way to man's lost heritage.

That the love of God has actually furnished such a way out of the rayless gloom of our lost condition, is the glorious announcement of Christianity. From the throne of God, the only begotten Son, Jesus Christ, the Saviour, descends, takes our nature upon Him, and by His own crucified Body makes a bridge for us, by which to pass from this world to the next.

§ 31.

Of all the titles given in Holy Scripture to the Lord, that of "Saviour" is the most expressive and accurate. The term "Mediator," also applied to our Blessed Lord, must not be allowed to deceive us into deeming man to be any other than the thing he now actually is. A "Mediator" suggests, insidiously to human pride, more assets in merit and right than man possesses. It calls up a vision, all too honorable, of the balancing of claims, and of concessions on the one side and on

the other; and of the smoothing out of misconceptions in the good hope of restoring normal relationship.

This is plainly misleading. Jesus Christ, in His relationship to us, is preëminently our Saviour; for in bridging over the awful space between God and our race, He looks for no help from man. He has "trodden the wine press alone." He demands no terms; for man has plainly none to give. Such a proposition from a Mediator would only be to re-echo human despair. The very offer of a Saviour supposes that we are lost, and the title helps us by supplying us with the first fact of the case. No terms: and yet a requirement. And the requirement is eminently a Saviour's, being characterized by a simplicity so gracious, that even the poverty of man's spiritual resources can compass it. "He that believes and is baptized shall be saved."

And yet, simple as this initial step is, there is a significance about it that demands reverent attention.

CHAPTER VI.

THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN.

§ 32.

STANDING in the presence of his offended Creator, man must not, ostrich-like, seek to protect himself by closing his eyes to his own dark record. This is not the quickest way, any more than it is the truest or most effective way of righting ourselves. And yet it is the resort of very many well meaning people, who are not wholly conscious of what they cling to, and who do not at all realize, that in the exact measure in which they dissemble their past to their own satisfaction, they leave themselves without a Saviour.

The familiar mental picture which we have all entertained, whether to reject after examination or to retain (possibly without examination), and which represents the Saviour as surrounded by the multitude who listen to His lofty and pure teach-

ing; witness His beneficent deeds; perhaps eat of the miraculous loaves; and then, gradually allow admiration inwardly and secretly to mellow into attachment, and finally into outright discipleship—this picture is the softened and toned-down form in which all who accept this as the way in which union with God is restored (or which is the same thing, disciples are made), agree to retain the light of nature for their guidance here, instead of the plainly expressed will of God our Saviour. These accept Christ as Mediator, not as Saviour.

We are not, however, left to such ordinary light for the conduct of this extraordinary business.

Our Blessed Lord has been careful to instruct us very fully and emphatically, concerning admission into that kingdom which He came to establish, and which is not of this world; and His instructions are very different, if not the direct opposite to any such trackless transition from the condition of outlaws, into that of children of the Household.

§ 33.

Though God indeed "bow the Heavens and come down," He cannot stoop to any confusion of good and evil. There is no irregularity; no abandonment of the eternal lines upon which the

Almighty ever proceeds. There is no forgetfulness of man's past with God, no matter how willing we may be to dissolve it into a mist and doubt; and in the application of the process which is meant to remedy that past, there can be none, if the Saviour's work is to be real.

If we reflect upon the analogy which the world supplies of a king having to do with rebellious subjects, we can understand just how far, and upon what conditions, the recreant mass shall be allowed to merge again into the royal ranks.

It is required, as their first act, of all rebels in such a case, that they lay down their arms.

And, without carrying the analogy any further, this procedure, based upon sound conceptions of right, supplies us with the primary phases of the simple yet significant requirement, which the Saviour lays upon the threshold of the world's restoration. Man, too, must lay down his arms—the Adamic arms of flesh in which he trusted to attain his ideal—and, acknowledging duly his impious rebellion, must accept the generous gift of pardon, together with entrance upon a different kind of life.

§ 34.

It is the farthest possible from truth, and a conception that does credit neither to our head nor

our heart, to say nothing of the bearing it exhibits towards the expressed sovereign will of the Saviour, to imagine that the principle here maintained by earthly monarchs is waived by the King of heaven, in receiving rebellious and lost sinners into His Kingdom of Grace.

Softened ineffably by the Saviour's wearing our form and bearing our nature, the principle is, nevertheless, fully adhered to in the requirement of Baptism as the initiatory rite. The word "Sacrament" is a remarkable witness to the degree in which the Church of the first centuries was imbued with this fact. "Sacrament" is a word that, notwithstanding its world-wide use throughout Christendom, from the earliest days, is not only not to be found in Holy Scripture, but is of thoroughly unchristian, that is to say, heathen origin.

The very first connection of the word with anything Christian is to be found in Pliny the Younger's well-known letter to the Emperor Trajan, where he tells his imperial master that these extraordinary people, the Christians, "meet together, and bind themselves by a Sacrament not to permit themselves in any wickedness." Pliny, no doubt, had in his mind the common meaning of this word, familiar to every heathen soldier

of the Empire, *viz.*, the oath taken on the standard of his general, to do a soldier's duty. That this foreign word has long become such a familiar term amongst Christians of all lands and languages, tells us plainly that admiration for Jesus Christ, and a friendly inclination towards Him, were alone considered to be as sufficient to "make a disciple," *i.e.*, to make a Christian out of a non-Christian, as an equal neglect of all due form was permitted in making Roman legionary.

Renunciation of the past, not only in its various acts of ill-doing, but in its whole underlying principle of innate self-dependence; the formal, complete vacating and abjuring of that state; and instead of this, the being counted "in Christ"—all this is not only not waived, but is held to be so essentially necessary, that the Saviour expressly ordains for it the utmost acknowledgment and registration of which soul and body, that is to say, man, is capable, in the due reception of a rite which regards the body as of equal importance with the soul.

§ 35.

But with this outward act (Baptism), which stands by Divine appointment instead of silent or otherwise expressed emotion, there must be joined an inward belief. And what is this belief,

we may well ask with fear and trembling; this condition which is required of creatures sunk in such a misery of impotence?

In seeking to answer this query, we cannot too faithfully remember all that has been said of man's total bankruptcy in any and every spiritual or meritorious sense; yet, though he can assuredly do nothing to merit or achieve any betterment of his condition, he can at least rise above a brutish ignorance of his state, and even acknowledge his sense of where and how he stands before his Maker. Now the attainment to this fundamental consciousness on our part, is pretty nearly the fulfilment of the pre-requisite to Baptism.

Man must trust in something or someone. He trusts therefore either in himself, that is, in human nature; or in the superhuman; and the surest way to direct his trust towards the superhuman, and his Saviour, is to enable him to mature his sense of his own and of humanity's untrustworthiness.

This inward knowledge of his state before God, and of which the intelligent submission to Baptism is the expression, is the native soil of the seed which produces fruit, thirty, sixty, an hundred-fold.

This condition in man, consisting of (1) con-

sciousness of absolute impotence to regain what we have lost; (2) the expression of that consciousness; and (3) the acceptance, and confession with the mouth, of Jesus Christ's as the only "name under Heaven given amongst men by whom we must be saved"—this condition is all the Saviour requires of a lost world; and the requirement demands of us nothing that is not fully within the reach of the most abandoned and hopeless amongst a race of sinful men.

This condition, then, upon which Baptism is given to us, is only an attitude of soul, which "places" us as it were for the full reception of the free gift of the Saviour. Belief, therefore, is not here, whatever it may be elsewhere, a something inconsistent with man's deplorable helplessness. It is rather the clear expression—the cry of that state of helplessness.

Belief here is not and cannot be an achievement of rare spirituality, required of a world dead to all spirituality.

CHAPTER VII.

BAPTISM OF JOHN THE BAPTIST.

§ 36.

THERE is danger at this point, of confusing the work of Christ with that of John the Baptist; and the agency of Baptism, with that of Repentance.

The sigh of the publican was the sigh of a person in covenant with God, who shuddered at a long retrospect of violations of that covenant.

For the healing of this disease, the Baptism of John was sufficient; but we must deepen the sigh infinitely, if we would make it the true echo of the soul's condition before Christian Baptism. Not only for sins consented to and committed, and therefore for sins for which it is the beneficent will of God to make repentance sufficient; but also for the sin of sins—the sin of Adam which fatally affected the mechanism of his own being,

and caused him to transmit to every child since born into the world, that unholy deformity: for all this ought we to sorrow, and in the person of Christ our second Adam and representative, we do sorrow, in that sigh which is the first breathing of the belief required in Baptism. Though the attitude of mind is doubtless the same in both cases, it is necessary to distinguish between the extent of the efficacy of the one, and of the other, of the Baptisms.

§ 37.

We see all this taught plainly by the action of those mentioned in the New Testament, who, having been baptized by John, came afterwards to the Apostles, to be baptized into the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost—in the first case seeking remission of the fruit sins; in the latter of the root, or original sin.

It cannot escape the notice of anyone who is at all familiar with the subject matter of the gospels, that the Saviour never treats nor speaks of our race as only partially gone wrong; as defective in certain respects here and there, and only needing a correcting hand to set all right again.

On the contrary, His whole treatment of mankind is that of one who is satisfied that patching

is futile, and that nothing less than the recasting of the whole mass will suffice.

Consequently, in seeking to learn how He brings home to us His wondrous achievement of salvation, we naturally look for one of those telling figures, those considerate references to familiar ideas, by which He is wont to bring the high things of His own doing, down to the level of our grasp.

And here we do not look in vain. Such a figure He has not failed to give us; and the familiar object to which He likens our union with Him, is one which is wholly satisfactory to every sincere seeker of a Saviour, and easily within the understanding of the least imaginative.

Standing in the midst of a lost world, surrounded by men with the seal of their perdition stamped upon them, the Saviour who has come to do a gracious work, and who knows that He has within Himself the creative power to re-make this spoiled material, humanity, well knows all the features of our case, and how to deal with it. The sin and misery which He saw about Him, brought to His mind, undimmed and unobscured by the thousands of years that intervened, the fatal, causative act of Adam in Eden, the ruinous effect of that act upon our first parents' har-

monious being; then the transmission of this defective nature to every succeeding age and individual; and lastly, the inevitable product—the miserable, unholy present, instinct with unsatisfied yearning. He looks along this whole vista which terminates at His feet, and beholds only the solitary figure of Adam in Eden, in the first pulsings of his and our wrecked nature. There the whole of the present, and of every present since the Fall, was embodied. To change this ever-recurring, pitiable present, the action of the Saviour must be far-reaching indeed, and thorough. It must not lose sight of Eden, and of all that transpired there.

In Adam, as we have seen, we all lay as possibilities. From that ancient trunk, time has produced a luxuriant growth, and shown all, the latest shoot as well as the earliest, equally poisonous. The close connection of the newest sprout here, with the parent trunk, is faithfully noted. The Saviour reviews the whole; and then calmly begins the eternal overthrow and reconstruction of the whole.

§ 38.

Adam the root, present in all the branches, shall give place to Christ the root, equally present in all the branches.

The Adamic tree, producing its branches by generation, shall witness the Christ-Vine multiplying His branches by regeneration. By birth, each of us becomes a branch of the false vine; by the new birth we shall, through sheer mercy, be made branches of the true Vine.

To those whom the Saviour has chosen out from the world and made His disciples, He said, "I am the Vine, ye are the branches." "He that abideth in Me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit, for without Me ye can do nothing." "If a man abide not in Me, he is cast forth as a branch and is withered."

His disciples, then, were not mere followers of a great Teacher. They were branches of a Vine, of which that mighty Teacher was the life-giving Vinestock. Here we have, taught by a faultless figure, a complete severance from the first Adam, and an equally complete merging of our life and being in the second Adam; apart from whom we can now do nothing—nothing in the new effective sense.

The Saviour's own hand cuts off from the old root of Adam, and grafts into the true Vine, the first disciples of Christ; and these are in turn commissioned by the Saviour to similarly ingraft the whole world, until every off-shoot from the Adamic

base shall have been cut off and grafted into the Christ-Vine, there to bring forth good fruit, and to flourish by the energy of a new, infused, holy life.

§ 39.

The commission to the first "branches" thus to multiply their number, was expressed in these words: "Go ye therefore and make disciples (or make Christians) of all nations, baptizing them into the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you, and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen."

Here we have men who were in possession of the Saviour's Divine grace, bidden to extend that blessing to others; and the method of communicating it is plainly and clearly stated by the Saviour, to be by baptizing them: "make disciples" of them—make them what you yourselves are—branches. "He that believes and is baptized shall be saved."

Baptism is, therefore, the meeting-ground of an offended Creator and His rebellious creatures.

There is no irregular, unseemly fusion possible here.

It is due to God that a reverent, meaningful formality should be observed; while it is becoming the mercy of a Saviour to make that requirement one that shall be well within the reach of men so destitute.

If it should seem that more is required of man than Baptism, thus understood, demands, in order to effect a living union with the Saviour, and to duly ingraft an Adamic growth into the true Vine; we must remember that, as this is all man is capable of, to require anything beyond this is to take away from the full efficacy of the Saviour.

This is wretched humanity's best presentation. To look for more is to attribute to the Redeemer a miscalculation of the possibilities of the situation; and miscalculation here means failure.

In fact, it may at this very juncture be asked if man, not merely on the threshold of his life in Christ, but in the full noon-day of matured discipleship, is capable of anything more than an acknowledgement, true and real, of his own proper helplessness and undeservingness?

Beyond this, surely all is borrowed from "Him who giveth all."

CHAPTER VIII.

CHRISTIAN BAPTISM.

§ 40.

IN BAPTISM, the relationship which water bears to the spiritual meaning of the sacrament, and the importance of water as a factor therein, are just the relationship and the importance which the body possesses in the complex being of man; and the body being as eternal and immortal as the soul, the necessity of its being provided for in that sacrament of life, after its kind, is as absolute as any claim the soul can lay to recognition therein.

We have duly noted that it is man, in the fullness of his two-fold being, that Christianity seeks, first to restore to his Paradisiacal condition, and then to perfect as our "Father which is in heaven is perfect"; and therefore all exclusively soul-religion is a distortion of the plan of Christ the

Saviour, and must inevitably result in missing the aim of true Christianity.

We are not permitted to indulge the natural inclination to omit the body from our conception of Christianity, heaping it with all manner of contempt and blame; but rather to dedicate it utterly to God, to present it as a habitation for the Holy Ghost, and to exercise it in the service of Him who is content, now and through all eternity, to wear it at the right hand of God on high.

In fact, it would almost seem that our Blessed Lord, not content with vindicating the right of the body to equal consideration and value with the soul, was inclined at times to make it paramount.

His very choice of the vine—of so visible, tangible, and familiar an object—as the great type and model of our union with Himself, is witness of this.

§ 41.

There is a difficulty with many, however, in bringing themselves to admit this position in religion for the body and its outwardness, and though we seldom meet with any confession in so many words, of such unwillingness, there is no lack of evidence of its widespread, misleading influence.

That any outward act affecting the body, any visible, physical form or ceremony, such for in-

stance as the application of water in Baptism, can have any deep, eternal significance in a religion which is so conspicuously and avowedly one of the heart, is offensive to the judgment of not a few people of whose devoutness we cannot doubt.

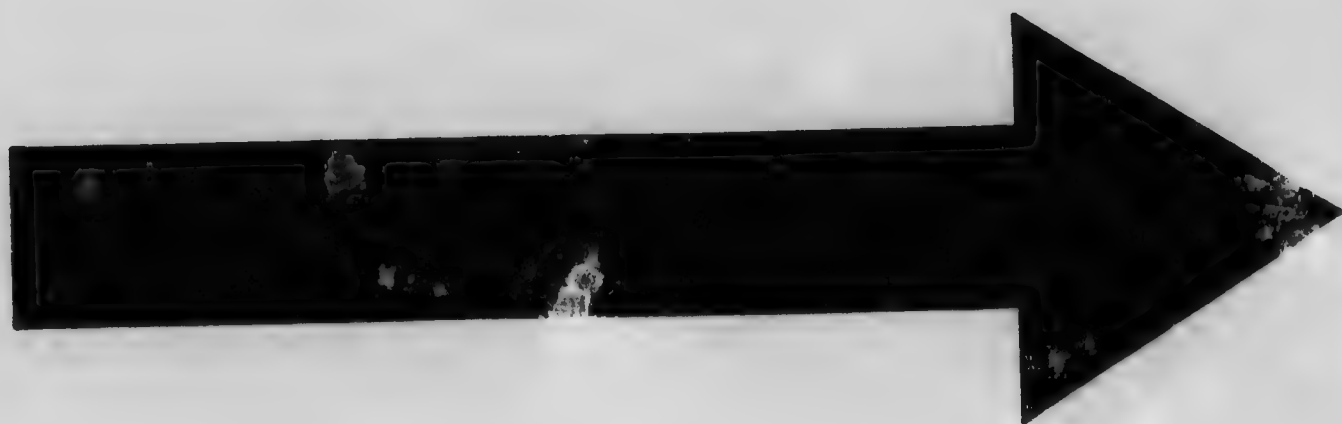
The revulsion produced in such minds by the high claim made for such outward features, is not, however, the result of calm, prayerful contemplation of the whole case, with the words of the Saviour before the mind ; but springing up within us as it does naturally, and without any effort, we must seek the cause deep down in the very structure of the heart of man.

First, it is hard for us children of Adam (for the old nature struggles hard for its life within us) to concede that "there is no health in us"; and, simple as the Baptismal requirement is, it sorely sifts us to the core.

We confess with reluctance, that we all, in the loins of Adam, effected such impious and complete ruin of our prospects, as to render futile and vain our most heroic efforts to right ourselves.

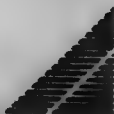
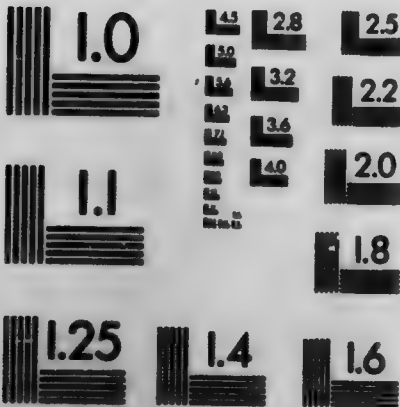
That any thing of moment affecting our best interests can be done, and we have no part in it, is a vicious blow to human pride, and one which we are constitutionally disposed to spare ourselves.

Constructed as we are, there is on the other



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hand nothing so soothingly satisfactory to our bribed reason, as to feel that we in a measure buy our blessedness from heaven, by bringing to the exchange certain marketable treasures of good within ourselves.

The mind seldom enters with any kindly energy, however, into the dutiful task of finding out to what, or to whom, we owe what we bring, or think we bring.

“By faith we are saved”—here in this “sound and most wholesome doctrine” we rest our subtle, unconscious vindication of human worth; with argumentation born of instincts closely allied to those which prompted Saul to save some darling things from a ruin which God had commanded him to make ruthlessly complete (I. Sam. xv.).

Faith saves us, purchases redemption; and this “faith” we can produce within the limits of our own resources. Our humanity can still achieve this thing, and when we think we have successfully wrought it out, we come to the font, or to the altar rails as the case may be, and there lay down our freight of merit, and strive as we may to believe that we are about to receive as a free gift, that which we have done everything in our power to render a thing of barter and exchange.

Faith may truly be said to be the hearing and

believing the voice of the Saviour which says, "Come unto Me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest;" but the impression which that Divine voice makes upon us is precisely the counterpart, in depth or shallowness, of our consciousness of our own proper worthlessness.

Let the foundation of Faith be well laid in the inviolable conviction of our true condition before God, and we have warranty for a living, fruitful faith on the hearing of the Saviour's voice.

Let us, on the other hand, fail to do justice to this fundamental fact; let us lean to the fond, lingering mistake, that from the embers of human resource or hope, some spark may still be blown into a flame that shall illumine our darkness, and promise to lessen the difficulties of recapturing Eden—let us lean to this, and what is the result as regards faith? The result plainly is, that as this is but the old Pelagian lie, and we cling to it, we are only repeating the unhappy work of Adam, and putting the Saviour irrevocably from us; an act of impiety to which even Adam did not attain.

§ 42.

Coming thus to the sacrament of Baptism, it is not very wonderful that we should be disposed to attach very little value to a rite, so simple and

so external as the application of a little water; an act not only outward and bodily, and therefore, we think, unavailing in religion, but an act above all which *owes nothing whatever to us*. Here, doubtless, is the real difficulty; and difficulty it certainly is; leveling us to the true level of our powers in the struggle for salvation.

But this difficulty ought to be understood by us a little better than it is.

We should know that it is because so much is due to God, that so little is to be credited to ourselves: and further than this, we should realize that the kernel of the difficulty lies in our failure—perhaps our stubborn unwillingness—to acknowledge all this.

As regards the Saviour's part in Baptism, it is hardest for us to conceive of a Nature so ineffably nobler than our own, and so unmercenary, with all our experience gained from a world whose well understood maxim and motto is, "Nothing for nothing."

Then, too, a superficial gauging, by commonplace ideas, of the office which water performs in this sacrament, very naturally leads to an unsatisfactory estimate.

But it is little wonderful that the light of reason, which guided us with such poor success

hitherto, should continue to misguide us here, where it is as ungracious as it is impious to attempt to exercise it critically.

No one who understands—that is, takes the trouble to understand—the true situation, can have any quarrel with the simple features of this momentous sacrament; for (if it be permitted us to have any opinion of the fitness of any of our Blessed Redeemer's institutions), we may see how fairly it sets forth man's expression of despair through sin, his abandonment of the Sisyphean task of trying to recover the irrecoverable, and his embracing the free gift which the Saviour has to bestow; while on God's part it is gracious to infinity, in all it conveys and the little it imposes; even though so just in its pivotal requirement, that man shall acknowledge that he is but dust—unhallowed dust, which God consents to re-animate.

Thus obedience and deathless gratitude become us rather than questioning.

The brief formality stands, in its simplicity, like a wall of adamant between man and presumption.

Having failed utterly to right ourselves, and every attempt towards this end, no matter how promising, only succeeding in fastening our chains

more tightly upon us, because proceeding from a wrong and unholy principle, *viz.*, that of trusting to a something which is not God, we are in no position to suggest from resources which have so fatally confounded ourselves, improvements upon the plan of our Lord and Saviour. That plan, as laid down by our Redeemer, who surely deserves to be trusted both to know and to do what is best, and only what is necessary, is Baptism, in its outward and visible, and its inward and spiritual phases.

To tamper with either of these is awful, in its sullen hostility to the ways of God.

§ 43.

The Church of God, following closely in the steps of the Apostles, has from the first, faithfully guarded this entrance to the true life and immortality.

To those who would endanger the proportion of the Faith by thinking of the outward part, or, as it were, the body of the Sacrament of Baptism, as the whole of the Divine ceremony, she presents, for closer study, the teaching of our Lord Jesus Christ concerning the conditions of life in the branches of the vine, wherein it is plainly set forth, that the most careful grafting, if unduly trusted in, may only result in adding a *dead branch* to the vine—

a branch which, because it did not exhibit the object of its ingrafting by drawing its life from the Vine-Stock, has brought down upon itself the doom of being cast forth and consigned to the burning.

To those on the other hand, who, in the joy and consolation of having eyes that see, and ears that hear, and hearts that understand the object of the Saviour in this grafting, viz., eternal life in Jesus Christ, and therefore such life as is in Jesus Christ, so fasten their wrapt gaze on that great boon as to think little of the Divinely appointed steps thereto, and having omitted to give these steps that attention which is their just due, finally arrive at denying their right to such attention—to all such the Church faithfully presents the full gospel truth, that this precious gift is made to those only who observe the conditions, so fully and mercifully within our reach, which the Saviour is careful to lay down as a thing He requires of all who would profess and call themselves Christians. “Make disciples (or Christians) of all nations, baptizing them into the Name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost”; and “Whosoever (believes and) is baptized shall be saved.”

The contemplation of the great Salvation which the Saviour brings to man, fosters in him de-

sire, and with desire for this gift is generated a true heart-warming towards the Divine Giver; but attractive and full of heavenly sweetness as this state may even be, it is nevertheless not that union which our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ teaches and requires. Probably the best that can be said of it is that which our Lord said to the scribe in the gospel history—"Thou art not far from the kingdom of God" (xii. 34).

But encouraging as this is, it is an emphatic assertion in substance that entrance had not actually been made, in the case of the scribe, into the kingdom of God.

Branches in the Vine, and discipleship according to the will and plan of the Saviour, are therefore not thus effected.

No matter how the surrounding trees may bow and do kindly, cordial obeisance to the true Vine, yet unless they are duly grafted into that Vine, they are apart from it—apart from the Source of life, and are still impotent. "Apart from Me ye can do nothing."

Jesus Christ, who "created the world with power and restored it by obedience," asks of those who would be saved, one act of obedience, and that of a character which cannot be refused Him except by the manifestation of present unfitness,

or want of true desire for His Salvation: which two expressions are but longer ways of saying that such persons reject Christ.

Attachment to the person of Christ, and the possession of much of what is popularly called "goodness," no matter how true and unselfish, if the will of Christ, being known, is still neglected, constitute only a beautiful and pathetic failure in the direction of Christianity; and it is unnecessary to point out that such "spiritual" union (so-called) with Christ is shockingly unspiritual in the truest sense of the word, because (1) of its want of sympathy with the spirit of Christ, which is, above all else, loyalty to the will of God: and (2) because this mere sentimental attachment to the person of Christ, makes no visible, marked break with self-reliant Adamism. It does not dutifully submit to that formal, declarative act, by which confession of error is made, abandonment of an unholy course is effected becomingly, and readiness to accept unmerited mercy is devoutly shown.

Now this gratuitous waiving of any part of the requisite ceremony of restoration, by such abject petitioners as we are, is surely a bold species of indevoutness; but when we remember that the ceremony in question has been not only sanctioned

and referred to, but instituted and commanded as the one plan of the Saviour, by the Saviour Himself, where is the piety that does not shudder at the thought of deliberately ignoring it?

No account has to be given by us to human reason here as to the efficacy of so simple and outward a rite. To know the will of God, and to obey it, is all our concern. "To obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken, than the fat of rams."

§ 44.

To fail here is, by implication and extension of the principle, to impeach before the bar of human wisdom all such beneficent acts of our Lord Jesus Christ as that which preceded His "Ephphatha," and the opening of the eyes of the blind man: "And He took him aside from the multitude, and put His fingers into his ears, and He spit and touched his tongue."

It is to impeach every union of the spiritual with the material.

It is to impeach the very being of the Saviour Himself, whom we know only through His flesh and blood.

It is to run fair for the haven of Manicheanism.

§ 45.

Heart-warming towards Jesus Christ, from

whatever cause, which shows with such glowing beauty when contrasted with that state of heart and mind and life in the baptized which is represented by the dead or dying branch, must, nevertheless, not be mistaken for Christianity.

Let it be allowed to be "not far from the kingdom of God"; and in the face of the fact that the Saviour has given and enjoined but one manner of *making Christians out of non-Christians, viz., by baptizing them*—this is all it can be.

Besides, what is there impelling us, where is the rationality that forces us to consider *fitness for ingrafting* to be the full equivalent of, aye, preferable to, the ingrafted state itself?

How can we hope to make it plain that the existence of vitality in the branch which we would ingraft, is our warrant for foregoing the operation of grafting? Is it not, on the contrary, our best human reason for proceeding with the grafting? And finally, could anyone with any shadow of wisdom, ingraft a branch which gave no such indications (where such indications were possible) of life, and fitness for the ingrafting?

Now in this living condition of the branch before ingrafting, we have unerringly set forth the very desirable state of those who, not yet baptized, manifest real love for, and even likeness

to the Saviour—a love and a likeness which shame and condemn those who, having been duly united to Him, have obstructed the life that should have come into them, and obstructed it, too, by a love for, and a likeness to what is hostile to their Saviour—the World, the Flesh, and the Devil.

§ 46.

But we must not compare the best that exists outside of the Vine (which is true meetness for sharing the life of that Vine), with the worst that claims a regular and real union with the Vine; for we know that it is possible, alas! to prove the existence of true branches of that Vine, which are now dead from causes above mentioned: and are doomed apparently only to be cut off and cast into the fire.

We must, in all reason, compare the best of one thing with the best of another, if we would attain to a righteous and just appreciation of the relative merits of those compared things.

Let us hasten to do this.

To pick out from among men one who could satisfy every conception of a fit representative of all that is possible in godliness, stern righteousness, yes, even knowledge and love of Jesus Christ, outside of the pale of Christian Baptism, would be an undertaking which, though imperative here,

it were hopeless to attempt to do satisfactorily, but for one consideration: and that is, that our Lord Jesus has Himself authoritatively undertaken this difficulty for us, and we have only to accept His judgment.

He has indeed pointed out one, whose name will arouse no antagonism to the claim: John the Baptist, the forerunner and announcer of the world's Saviour. Our Lord not only points us to John the Baptist, and says, "Among them that are born of women, there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist," but He immediately proceeds to institute the very comparison we ourselves now wish to make, and for our Lord's treatment and settlement of this matter every Christian man and woman must feel devout thankfulness. For if this selection had to be made by erring men, it might—indeed it would almost certainly—have been wrongly done: or being done justly, it might, and even more certainly would, have been disbelieved.

Our Lord makes a comparison which is not that of the best among the non-baptized, with the best of those who have been baptized, which is all that fairness requires; but a much more forcible comparison and contrast, and one divinely intended to place that new existence, new develop-

ment to which Baptism admits, upon an elevation, the true glory of which we are to understand from the extreme inequality of the comparison, from the fact that the earliest stage of discipleship here (among the baptized) transcends maturity of spiritual attainments elsewhere: "Verily I say unto you, among them that are born of women, there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist, *notwithstanding, he that is least in the kingdom of heaven, is greater than he.*"

If this need opening it is this: John the Baptist is the very best of those who have not been admitted into the Christian Church by its initial rite of Baptism; and yet the least within that Divine Society—the least of those, possibly, who are in any living degree branches—is greater than even John the Baptist. That our Lord means the Church by His favorite expression, the Kingdom of Heaven, is put beyond all controversy by His parable of the tares, and His exposition of that parable (Matt. xiii. 24, 31).*

* "The drift of the parable is to represent unto us the present and future state of the Kingdom of Heaven—the gospel Church. . . . The visible Church is the Kingdom of Heaven; though there be many hypocrites in it, Christ rules it as a King; and there is a remnant in it that are the subjects and heirs of Heaven. . . . The Church is the Kingdom of Heaven on earth" (Matthew Henry, *in loco*.).

§ 47.

The existence of teaching upon the subject of Baptism which is not consonant with apostolic truth, has certainly, side by side with its awful evil, one good effect: it drives us back upon the original defences of the faith, it obliges us to review the Church's long struggle with man-made conceptions of the truth committed to her; and calls us once again to mark well her bulwarks.

In this walk round Zion, we discover the repeated instances of that to which attention has already been attracted, that the tendencies to irregular teaching which mark our day, are not at all peculiar to our day; but have appeared again and again back through the centuries. These tendencies produce new names, but the names are often only the new faces of very old foes.

Manicheanism, with its abhorrence of matter, as being essentially evil, is the deadly root from which springs the unwillingness to give due regard to the outward phase of the Sacrament of Baptism; while the hydra-headed hope—that within the limits of our old nature, if we would only do it the fullest justice, there is a potency which leaves us little to desire from without ourselves—is the unmistakable evidence that Pelagianism is too

deeply rooted in our Adamic nature, to ever cease to trouble any generation of Christians.

§ 48.

“Go ye into all the world and make Christians of all nations, baptizing them into the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, and *teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded*; and lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen.”

The observing of all things whatsoever the Saviour has commanded, is the complement of that first obedience, born of, at least, misery and hopelessness, which ~~sees~~ ^{sees} and undergoes Baptism, and upon which the Saviour may be said to re-create humanity; for the “good” of which Baptism is the simple instrument, is a “good” essentially in its nature *above the reach of the creature*. It is an act which regards the cardinal features of the very structure of the creature—man.

This reconstruction of man by the Saviour, or more accurately, the restoring, by Him, of the original Divine balance lost by Adam, and by Adam lost for each and all of us, is the work of the Saviour in Baptism; a work with which every being less than the Creator is unfitted to grapple.

But when this miraculous, creative act is accomplished, faithfully and truly upon that full

and reverent obedience, Baptism, which is so vividly illustrated by the grafting of a branch into the Vine, then begins man's work—"observing all things," etc.—without which the ingrafting must come to nothing.

The following illustration is humbly submitted. Conceive a railway engine which, by some rashness, has been hurled from the track, and, rolling down the embankment, rests, after a complete revolution upon all its wheels, at the bottom. By no conceivable exertion of its locomotive power, can it recover its normal condition on the rails. Every effort to right itself must only imbed it more deeply and hopelessly in the lower ground. There is nothing in all the fine machinery of which it consists, that can afford any hope of surmounting the embankment and regaining the firm, necessary rails. The creator of the engine—man—must again use that creative power, his intellect, in order to remedy the disaster.

And now what do we notice in the application of this friendly, superior power that comes to the rescue? The mighty forces of the wrecked locomotive lie all inert and ignored, because of their uselessness here, and this whole ponderous thing of strength itself becomes a dead weight upon another and greater strength.

The engine is taken up bodily by a power not at all its own, and is set a second time where it was alone designed to operate—on the rails.

§ 49.

The power that was useless, or only destructive, when exerted in the fallen condition, and which was utterly unable to recover the lost position, is now the required force to propel the righted locomotive along its legitimate course.

The case of the railway engine is man's case. From the moment of their wrecks, nothing good can be done by either; no self-righting is to be thought of.

But once rescue—that giant mercy—is extended, and the Creator again puts forth the creative power, each is competent to do acceptable work.

The XIIIth Article of the Church of England, which deals with this subject, is therefore true to the mark, though a casual reading of it, in the light of a self-valuing world, makes it sound harsh:

“Works done before the grace of Christ, and the inspiration of His Holy Spirit, are not pleasant to God, forasmuch as they spring not of faith in Jesus Christ, neither do they make men meet to receive grace or (as the school tumors say) de-

serve grace of congruity ; yea rather, for that they are not done as God hath willed and commanded them to be done, we doubt not but they have the nature of sin."

Man's work, in any meritorious sense, begins after Baptism ; of which more, shortly.

The imagery of the railway engine, replaced upon the rails, makes two other important and pertinent facts very clear. If the righted locomotive, now that it has an opportunity to apply its energy with the prospect of doing good instead of harm, fails to make any such due effort, trusting to what has been done for it, the work of rescue will have been bestowed in vain ; for it rests as far from its proper goal as when it was a wreck ; if again, this befriended engine only puts forth a part of its strength, and that spasmodically, the defect of application is certain to be registered in the space by which it will fall short of attaining its proper and possible destiny.

§ 50.

The instructive inferences from the creature of man's handiwork to the creature of God's, need no elaborating.

There is one thing of which we could wish to be quite sure, and that is, that neither the one nor the other, as they speed nobly on their course,

shall forget their debt of obligation and gratitude; and instead of it permit their success to be considered as self achieved.

With regard to those to whom we have referred above, and who do not think outward Baptism necessary in order to effect a fusion with Christ, this analogy of the locomotive is singularly uncomplaisant. The imagination cannot sustain the picture of a railway engine proceeding along the low ground where it has fallen, in a kind of sympathetic parallel with the route designed by its maker; especially when this impossible road-bed is chosen as an improvement upon the rails.*

When man in Baptism has been, by an act of Divine grace, restored to his Paradisiacal prospect, he must exert all the powers within him to do what is expected of him. His goal has to be reached, and the reaching it crowns his career.

Before he was righted by a Saviour's achievement, this goal was impossible. The Saviour's achievement has now rendered it possible, *but it has not bestowed it.*

* The conception recalls a scene in the *Hippolytus* of Euripides, equally unmeant to be ludicrous, where the hero is dragged along the rocky beach, by his runaway coursers, and seems to derive considerable comfort, between the bumps, from muttering pathetic ejaculations about what a model young man he is. But Hippolytus had not refused rescue; and never proposed this *extra-chariot* careering as an improvement upon better-known methods.

CHAPTER IX.

INFANT BAPTISM.

§ 51.

ALL that has been said about the first formal and Divinely appointed application of the work of the Saviour to mankind individually, may seem to refer exclusively to those who have attained to years of discretion, and to leave the Church's custom of baptizing tender infants in need of some explanation.

The existence of a body of modern Christians who have found man's share in the restored relationship with God to be so considerable, that children are, in their opinion, impossible candidates, makes it a decent courtesy to review the Church's reasons for pursuing here, as elsewhere, amid the ever-changing scenes of Church-life, the changeless tenor of her way.

§ 52.

The pivotal difficulty is this: children cannot repent, and how then can they be baptized? Which is the same as saying, children cannot understand a benefit, and how can they be benefitted? The light of nature is assumed to advance the objection. If we could be sure that the light of nature be the supreme arbiter of this question whether children ought to be baptized or not, we might be inclined to concede something perhaps of what the Antipædo-Baptists, or (as they are now called) Baptists, say, regarding the inability of infants to meet the requirement of repentance as preparatory to Baptism; and to see less wrong in their rending the body of Christ, to establish an independent sect upon so apparently slender a basis (Eph. i. 23; Col. i. 24).

§ 53.

But the light of nature could not save us, in its sufficiently long trial-time before the coming of Christ our Redeemer, and we must therefore, however reluctantly, take it down from its high pedestal, and make way for the reverent hearing of the mind of Christ, as expressed both by the words and deeds of the inspired writers of the New Testament.

The light of nature, into whose constituents negation of human merit before God does not readily enter, is not so wholly, as may at first sight be imagined, on the side of excluding children from federal relationship with Christ, because of their incapacity to understand and to give intelligent assent to the obligations that go with all covenants.

Does not the latest child born in our land, of British parents, really enter as fully into the right of the covenant of citizenship, as a Minister of the Crown or the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court? The knowledge and intelligent assent of the latter does not gain for him over the ignorance and impotence of the former, any more extended or more real protection.

Place the two in a foreign country temporarily, and malicious treatment at the hands of that country brings no more help to the Minister or the Chief Justice from his own country than that which would be extended to the infant.

They are both citizens, both claim all that their country can do for them, and the claim in both cases is honored.

The child therefore enters into the covenant of citizenship, and the obligations as well as the benefits of citizenship belong to it as fully as they do

to the mature British subject; only the nation, in its requirement of each, is satisfied with the possible, and does not demand from either that which is beyond his powers.

British and United States children are not held as aliens before the law until they can intelligently take the oath of allegiance.

§ 54.

This ray of the light of nature, therefore, casts a rather forbidding hue upon that representation of the kingdom of God which it was invoked to confirm; for it shows all the kingdoms of this world as incomparably its superior.

§ 55.

The law of nature and of nations puts children in the power of their parents: and parents are divinely placed in that relationship to their children which God Himself occupies toward the parents. "Honor thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee."

Through the object-lesson of earthly fatherhood, it is thus designed that we shall all learn to understand that otherwise inexplicable, blessed actuality—that blending of mercy and judgment which is the summarized character of God.

Parents therefore being the natural guardians of their children, have a right to transact the business pertaining to any interests of their children.

§ 56.

And with the illustration of the privilege of citizenship in mind, we may fully agree with Bishop Burnet's dictum: "What contracts soever they (the parents) make, by which the child does not lose, but is a gainer, these do certainly bind the child."

St. Peter, in urging Baptism upon his hearers, says (Acts ii. 39): "The promise is unto you, and to your children;" and his audience well knew what that meant. Their minds reverted at once, not only to the right of admission into the covenant with God by circumcision, which their infants enjoyed as Jewish children, but to the extension of this privilege to the children of heathen and idolatrous parents who had become Jews. These, too, had the right of entry into covenant with God, a right hinging on their parents' will.

§ 57.

St. Paul, in deciding the question as to whether one of the parties in a married state, who had become a Christian, while the other remained a heathen, ought to continue to live with the heathen

spouse, declares that the union must be maintained; for there is a communication of blessing from the Christian to the heathen; and adds that if this were not so, the children of this union must be regarded as unclean, that is, unfitted to be dedicated to God; but now are they "holy," that is, eligible through the one parent to enter into formal relationship with, and under the avowed protection of, God. For the word "holy," as the word "saint," is used by the apostle as referring to the federal, rather than to the inner personal condition; to people as Christians, rather than to people as faultlessly Christlike.*

§ 58.

Thus the children of parents, one only of whom is a Christian, are to be brought to Christ and entered into His Covenant by Baptism.

There is no question anywhere raised, as to the case of children *both of whose parents are Christians*.

That the appeals of the apostles, in the first promulgation of Christianity, should therefore (that is, since the mind of the people, instructed by God in the initiatory rite of circumcision, was that parents acted for their children in these matters), be directed to thinking and intelligent minds, is

* Note D.

too natural to need any explanation; as it is too usual in cases where parents and children alike are interested, to warrant any restriction to those only who are old enough to act in the matter, of the benefits obviously meant for and offered to all.

§ 59.

The demur that there is no command in the New Testament to baptize children, is a fatuous thing, analogous, when the situation is duly considered, to the assertion that since there is not anywhere in the New Testament to be found an explicit command to walk on our feet in an upright position, it is presumption in fallen beings to assume any such posture, without being able to point to a particular text of Scripture which unequivocally enforces it.

God has adequately, if in different ways, enjoined both the walking, and the bringing of the young to Him, and has never interrupted human conformity to these His laws, by sending any counter command.

It is needless to state, that if any such counter command were ever given, the proclamation would not be posted in quarters likely to necessitate any great research.

§ 60.

The mandate "Go ye therefore and teach all

nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost," was given by our Lord to men who were Jews, and who, as Jews, were as sure that children were meant, as that they themselves were: and therefore, instead of there being any force in the objection "There is no command in scripture to baptize infants" (a cavil which need not stop here but might also add that there is no command to baptize women, nor to admit women to the Holy Communion, nor any command to worship God on the first day of the week), instead of there being force in this objection, we can more reasonably say that since there is not only no command in the canonical Scriptures against it, against this strong current of God-given custom, but not so much as a question as to whether that current shall be allowed to flow on, we have warranty enough at least to expect that there was no attempt made to stem the tide.

And so we go from the words, and more significantly, the absence of words, of the writers of the New Testament, to the *acts* of these inspired men, and their immediate successors.

And here we must emphasize the fact that we do not go to these early Christians, successors of the apostles, for their opinion of what ought to be, or to have been, for in this, modern opinion may

be as good as theirs; but we go to them for what they saw with their eyes to be the custom of the Church in their time.

In this way we get to know what the apostles did, and that which the apostles did, is as authoritative as what the apostles said, or say.

§ 61.

It is wholly inconceivable that men with the apostles' knowledge of God's law—when they came to execute their commission and make Christians of all nations—should do such violence to their inclinations as to pass children by, and this without the slightest authority from our Lord, and without their own making the faintest reference in any of their writings to such a momentous precedent.

We read that they, in more than one instance, baptized whole households, and no hint is given us of this unheard of exclusion of the young (Acts xvi. 15, 33; I. Cor. i. 16).

Did they exclude them? Let us call in the witnesses.

§ 62.

Justin Martyr, in a work which he wrote less than fifty years after the death of the last of the apostles, tells us: "There were among Christians in his time many persons of both sexes, some sixty and some seventy years old, who had been made

disciples to Christ in their infancy." He makes Baptism to be the Christian Circumcision (and therefore as much an ordinance for children as circumcision was, Lev. xii. 3), saying, "We have not received that carnal circumcision but the spiritual circumcision which Enoch and those like him observed, and we have received it by Baptism, through the mercy of God, because we were sinners, and it is incumbent on all persons to receive it in the same way."

Irenæus, Bishop of Lyons, born within the first century, was a disciple of Polycarp, who was a disciple of St. John.

Seventy-six years after St. John's death, being then nearly eighty years old, Irenæus wrote his book "Against Heresies." In this book he says: "The appointed way of escape from the guilt of original sin is Baptism," which, he adds, is our regeneration, or new birth unto God. "For," says he, "Christ came to save all persons by Himself, all I say who by Him are regenerated unto God—infants and little ones and children and youths and elder persons; therefore He went through the several ages, being made an infant for infants, that He might sanctify infants; and for little ones He was made a little one to sanctify them of that age also."

"No art," says Bingham, from whom we take the above, "can elude this passage, so long as it is owned that Regeneration means Baptism: and for this we have the explication of Irenæus himself, who calls Baptism by the name of Regeneration.

In the age of Irenæus then, that is, in the second century, it was plainly the common practice of the Church to baptize infants.

Tertullian lived in the latter part of the second century and the beginning of the third. He is a peculiar witness, and gives his testimony in an indirect but very effective manner.

We have remarked that it is not for the *opinions* of these ancient writers that we go to them concerning this subject, but in order that we may interrogate them as to what they *saw* and knew to be the custom of the Church in their days.

The peculiarity of Tertullian's witness to Infant Baptism as being a custom of the Church in his days, is that it is all his own individual and private opinion that he gives us, which, as such, is of no use to us; but its value to us lies in its possessing also the character of evidence, and that of the very best kind: for he argues against the common practice of the Church, and tries to change it to his own way of thinking, which was,

that not only infants, but all persons that are unmarried or in widowhood, ought to be excluded from Baptism. Tertullian, who became and continued until his death a leader of the heretical Montanist sect, is thus the first great advocate for the exclusion of children from the sacrament of Baptism.

Origen lived and flourished a few years later than Tertullian in the early part of the third century. He says: "Everyone is born in original sin. What is the reason why the Baptism of the Church which is given for the remission of sins, is by the custom of the Church given to infants also? Infants are baptized because by the sacrament of Baptism the pollution of our birth is taken away. Except one be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of Heaven." He says again that "the Church received the order of baptizing infants from the apostles."*

* "The fathers who lived at the end of the second century, however much they were raised above their predecessors in power and range of thought, were trained by that earlier generation which they surpassed. They made no claims to any fresh discoveries in Christian truth: on the contrary they affirmed as their chief glory that they retained unchanged the tradition of the apostolic age. Their testimony is the clear expression of an earlier faith, and not the enunciation of novel deductions. They are the interpreters of the past and not the mouthpieces of a revolution" (Westcott, *The Bible in the Church*, p. 120).

§ 63.

These therefore are the men whom we have put into the box to tell us what they saw the Church do—the Church which Christ came to establish on earth, which existed for a quarter of a century before a word of the New Testament was committed to writing, and which in its various centres was the carefully organized and governed body for which the literature which now forms the New Testament was casually written; the Church, which, all the while cherishing them, never until the year 397, at Carthage, counted the number of these, her literary treasures. We have called the best and earliest witnesses to tell us what her custom was with regard to Baptism, and they have told us that she never excluded children from that sacrament.

CHAPTER X.

§ 64.

SIN AFTER BAPTISM.

LOOKING from the blighted Eden, and guided by Revelation, we have beheld the Saviour of mankind, and have listened to and weighed the gracious terms He offered to a lost world.

We stood upon the threshold of that bright hope which (as superseding all those promising ambitions which have been generated naturally in the fertile imagination of every age of Adamic history), one came down from the right hand of God to deliver. This threshold, Baptism, opened up to us almost the full outlook from the original Paradise. But now, Eden-like, and human still, we have to contemplate failure even in this state of restoration.

As the glory of Eden was its possibilities, so Baptism, our new Eden as it were, is (though we

often use concerning it language which might convey unfounded ideas of present achievement), likewise only desirable for the prospective reasons which exalted Paradise.

This strength of language must not shock us, for Baptism duly considered must be acknowledged to be either much, or nothing.

It certainly, and it alone, admits to our normal Godward development.

§ 65.

Baptism, in its true representation supposes faithfulness. When, however, we view the goal which Baptism points to, and then survey the hosts who ought to be, each and all, vigorously pushing forward to that point; and when we see from unmistakable evidence that the majority have not chosen so to exert themselves; when a voice of authority sums up the failures as "the many," and the successful as "the few," it becomes our duty to examine this second gloom which has settled over the race, and to search diligently for the light that must exist to dispel it.

Baptism supposes faithfulness, and we have reason and the highest authority for believing that the many are wanting in this faithfulness; and consequently, if they persist in their present

unacceptable methods, they must inevitably be lost to the hope of Christians.

We shall easily be able to run a dividing line between those who have, and those who lack, this faithfulness, if we ask of all professing Christians whether they truly make the expressed will of the Saviour of the world their supreme law, and use every energy within them towards the accomplishment of the great double task which Christianity presents to all its members, namely, to learn this law, and to carry it out.

Each man can ask this question for himself and of himself, and according to the honest reply of conscience, can take his position on the one or the other side of the line, standing thus by anticipation "on the right hand" or "on the left."

The success of the graft, in tree culture, is conditional upon the subsequent due care that all be done to further its effectiveness, and to prevent accident.

The success of Baptism is dependent upon the fulfilment of the entire Apostolic Commission of making Christians by baptizing them, and then "teaching them to observe all things whatsoever" the Saviour commanded.

This, reduced to its elements by our Lord Himself, is, loving God with all the heart, soul,

strength, and mind; and loving our neighbor as ourselves. This is the principle of that new life to which we are required to conform, and every hostile, every contrary tendency to which, must be abandoned, or obstruction in the branch is produced.

§ 66.

The presence in the world of much that is beautiful, of much even that is morally inviting, must not be allowed to withdraw our attention from the one permissible test of requisite faithfulness: namely, a conscious, pervading loyalty to the person and plan of Christ the Saviour.

That the home-life with which we are acquainted, and which characterizes Christian peoples of the present time does not call loudly for reformation; that there is filial duty and reverence abounding still in response to wise and worthy parental government; and that there is not wanting satisfactory evidence that the sacredness of this relationship is understood and felt to-day, very much as it ought to be—all this must not be allowed to decide the question of Christian or un-Christian for us.

There is reason to believe that a just survey of the motives that maintain the heavy machinery

of the world in activity—legislation, commerce, education—will find a large, a very large element of excellence, even faultlessness, to set down to the credit of our times. In daily life we meet with honesty quite as often at least as with its opposite; and it is not a proven fact that there is an overwhelming or even marked tendency among us to hatred and strife.

Kindliness and geniality of disposition, so far from being wanting among us, are tempers that are universally aspired to.

Yes, even beneficence is evinced in a manner beyond all cavil—hospitals are endowed and maintained, and churches built; but yet all this may not mean true Christianity, may not be an exhibition by the branches of the life which they have drawn from the vine.

It may all mean little more than Crimelessness—in any case a negative quality, so far as the religion of Christ is concerned.

It is certainly not the faithfulness required by the Saviour, unless it proceed from the internal motive principle of the new life as it is in Jesus Christ, *i.e.*, from love to God and man, in conscious, loving obedience to the expressed will of the Redeemer; apart from whom we can do nothing.

§ 67.

DIGRESSION ON FAITHFULNESS.

Here let us pause to jealously analyze this "faithfulness" which is a necessity, lest we seem to give encouragement to the notion which springs up again and again from the latent Judaism in us all, and insinuates the possibility, even the necessity, of our achieving some kind of worthiness for ourselves and by ourselves, before God.

A brief review of the parable of the "Laborers in the vineyard" will supply the best tonic to the prevalent morbid tendency of the mind here.

The laborers, hired early in the morning and at the third, the sixth, the ninth, and the eleventh hours, plainly refer in the application of the parable to Christians of our day, to the entrance of disciples of Christ upon His service, at periods of life proportioned to the earliness or advancement in the day of the respective hours of employment mentioned.

The penny promised to the earliest laborers, is the riches of the gospel.

When the evening arrives, and with it the hour of payment, those who worked but one hour are called, and given a penny each; later, the first employed come forward and are also given a penny each.

This reception by these men, of their penny, which they now view in the light of comparison with that which the eleventh hour laborers received, produces a state of mind which finds vent in murmuring and complaint.

Now this state of mind is permissible and altogether blameless, if it can be shown from any thing said or fairly implied in the hiring, that the service they are engaged to render is the just equivalent of the payment offered. But no such statement is made, and no such thing is implied.

§ 68.

In opposition to the service of the world, which worldlings may begin to find not so remunerative as they had hoped, or as they never doubted it would be, the summons from the Divine Householder, to labor in His Vineyard for a good, a real and sure reward, is made, indeed; but even in this forcing of an unmercenary matter into the mold of a money affair, in order to appeal to those who present no more favorable side, there is no ground given for the belief that if some laborers are swayed by merely mercenary motives, the Householder must be.

Those who made what they firmly believed to be a hard and fast bargain of so much work for so much pay, verily have their reward: and

they are, regarding matters from their point of view, not unnaturally dissatisfied with it, with their fellow laborers, and particularly with their employer; nor the less so because they have no actionable case against anybody.

But the feeblest perception could not have failed to see that the payment was not merely the just measure of the service done.

In form it was a penny, but the material was gold. But here as ever, "none so blind as those who will not see."

Length of service in God's Vineyard, true service that is, takes away our blindness and restores to us accuracy of vision.

We are laborers (or disciples) indeed if we continue in the Saviour's word, and we shall know the truth, and the truth shall make us free (St. John viii. 31, 32). Now what is this truth, which comes to true laborers in the Vineyard, and which sets the attitude of the murmurers in such an evil light?

It is that the call to the Vineyard is itself the conferring of a boon, in the very possibility it provides of doing the first act deserving of anything but punishment. It reveals to us that man in his lost condition is incapable of any good himself, incapable of anything but actual self-injury.

In the case of man as in that of the railway locomotive, the creator of the mechanism must again put his hand to the work, or ruin settles down forever on the wreck.

§ 69.

The truth which we shall know, and which shall make us free, teaches us that the Atonement of the Saviour has again placed us high upon the pathway of our real career, and that this act of mercy alone makes it possible, as we have said, to do anything right.

The labor of the Vineyard therefore is done on *ourselves*, in establishing within us a wholesome consciousness, a sober realization of just where we stand in a universe of which God is the true and acknowledged centre.

In all God's Vineyard there is nothing in so palpable need of having labor and attention bestowed upon it as we ourselves.

The longer we have labored, and the more truly and effectively we have wrought, the clearer will this truth be revealed to us, the keener will be our spiritual sight to see ourselves lifted by the crucified arm of our Redeemer from the low region whence the soul of hope is fled, and placed once more upon our homeward road.

This act of mercy, once perceived, engrosses all our thoughts in gratitude.

Everything we do now becomes a separate acknowledgment of our glorious debt, instead of a claim for the misconceived payment of hire. The truth which we have attained concerning ourselves, instinctively inclines to favor the *claim* of any other—even the latest of the late comers to the heavenly task—to a merit of which we are only certain that we ourselves are undeserving.

Thus appears the fatal misconception of the self-valuing laborers. Eternal life is indeed offered them, but, like vessels already full, they cannot receive it, and so it passes them by, and is lost to them.

Thus, too, we see something of the meaning of "faithfulness"—work in the Vineyard indeed, but work applied on ourselves and producing knowledge, deep and true, of our own proper unworthiness, knowledge whose native language is humblest gratitude.

The whole incident, from the call in the market-place to the payment of the last laborer, was a benefaction. It was the pressing needs of the men, not those of the employer, which prompted their call, and afforded their opportunity.*

* Note E.

§ 70.

If the central interest of our life springs from our union with Christ, and draws its sustenance from that one source of our nobler life, as the branch draws its nourishment from the parent stem in the vine; then all the good we do is Christian good—fruit of the true character to prove our condition as flourishing branches of that vine.

But unless we can assure ourselves of all this, we must set the whole *catena* of pleasing evidences of a not unkindly nature down as godlessness, albeit godlessness of a moral character and lying close on the borders of Christianity; yet exactly because of this, necessitating the clear, plain statement of fact, that it is not within the limits of Christianity—that it is not Christian.*

* Note F.

CHAPTER XI.

§ 71.

SIN AFTER BAPTISM (*continued*).

IN THE presence, therefore, of this failure, what is there for the many? They are still following the bent of the old, and preventing the manifestation of the new nature. They are branches indeed, and it may be said, green branches; but with a life that is deceiving.

They are green with the life which they *brought to the Vine*, not with that which they have drawn from it. They, in short, exhibit a life which it is possible to possess without ever having been grafted into the Vine.

From this wrong course, then, this failure in faithfulness, where lies the path back to the true way that was opened up to us at the font?

Are the unfaithful branches to be cut off, and

re-grafted into the Vine in the hope of finally making them what they ought to be?

Such a course, discountenanced by all knowledge and experience of the natural world, is, in the spiritual world—the world restored by the Saviour and therefore the very natural world—not less utterly proscribed.

The figure of the Vine, on which our Saviour would have us rivet our attention, is to be adhered to in nothing more closely than in this feature of permitting, by its very nature, no second grafting of a branch.

Baptism is never repeated by the Church.* What birth is to the natural life, Baptism is to the Christian life, *i.e.*, the entrance upon it.

If the spiritual birth bring forth a weak and sickly being, a disappointment to bright hopes, we cannot here, any more than in the natural life, seek a betterment of things by that impossibility, the repetition of the birth.

Is this “unfaithfulness,” then, irreparable?

* “St. Jerome observes that though there were many heretics in the apostles’ days, as the Nicolaitans and others, yet there was no command given to re-baptize them upon their repentance. And Optatus makes the unity of Circumcision a good argument for the unity of Baptism, in which both the Catholics and the Donatists agreed” (Bingham’s *Antiquities*, Vol. IV., Bk. XII., p. 62).

Is there any or no hope for those who are guilty of it? for the many?

A wrong committed can, in one sense, certainly never be undone. It becomes, on the instant, history, in a record whose accuracy is faultless and enduring. It cannot conceivably be erased. It cannot either be worked out by any intensity of future effort on the part of the offender. All idea of reparation is here absolutely barred. Each moment demands our utmost. We have therefore no present thing to offer, and no certain future to draw upon. The only hope which the nature of the case admits of, is pardon. We are utterly and absolutely dependent on the disposition of Him in whose hands we are. The knowledge, therefore, of that disposition, is a thing of paramount importance to men in our situation.

§ 72.

For the angels who sinned and fell from their high estate, there is not, so far as we can find, any hope of pardon. With them no parley is held; no desire expressed for their return.

With man, however, there is a difference. His case is chosen for a peculiar manifestation of Divine mercy. It is the bright side of the Church's mission, that she is sent to make this great fact known to mankind.

With man in his temporary wanderings from his God and Father, parley is indeed held. Evidence of this is abundantly given in the revelation which God has given us of His will. The whole texture of Holy Scripture is interwoven with this exceptional concession.

§ 73.

The ingrafting into the Church does not mean that the whole bent and tendency of the Adamic nature are obliterated, and that that nature itself is extinct.

The language of Scripture concerning this union with Christ leaves nothing to be desired as to the clearness of its meaning. It is the birth of a new nature, not upon the ruins altogether of the old, but side by side with that natural but now subordinate life.

It is, however, the building of a new hope on the ruins of the old hope. As to the two natures and their relativity, the new must increase, but the old must decrease. Growth and decay must go on together. As in the natural world, so here, nothing is done at a bound. The old nature, even in its dying throes, will assert itself; but it must never be given, as of old, the reins of government.

Conflicts, therefore, between these two forces within us, must be expected, and even when victory lies with the old nature against the new, all is not lost; the decision is not final, and the plan by which the Saviour would restore the world to happiness and to God does not yet fall short.

§ 74.

In that adequate plan such possibilities have been anticipated. It is the Church's responsible task to see that all things whatsoever the Saviour has commanded are observed after admission has been made into Christianity; that the spirit of the new life, and not that of the old, be followed; that is practically, that Christian teaching as we have noted above be poured upon the new "branch" from the Church directly, and indirectly through the filter of home influence. Where this has been wanting or unimproved, there remains the possibility of a chance meeting (humanly speaking) at some angle of life's road, with one of those stern preachers of righteousness whom God sends through the world upon the last errand of mercy to men, *viz.*,—"sorrow, need, sickness, or any other adversity."

Whether, therefore, by the ordinary ministrations of religion in the world, that is to say, by the Church; or through the extraordinary ministra-

tions of direst dealing by affliction, that godless Christians may be brought to see the error of their ways, they have only a little seeking to do in order to discover that their case is remediable; for man in such case is invited to reflect; to think his whole attitude over, and see if he cannot find out, and, finding out, justly estimate his irregularities.

And what can this mean, but that hope has not been cut off; that the final seal has not been set to his doom, nor that dread order yet gone forth—"Cut it down; why cumbereth it the ground?"

§ 75.

Sin after Baptism is, therefore, assuredly within the range of the pardoning love of God.

But that promise implied in the continuous appeal which Holy Scripture makes to all men, baptized and unbaptized alike, to consider their ways, it is guaranteed; and the force of these reiterated appeals must not be overlooked, for it is God, who cannot lie, who makes these astounding propositions to mankind, these exceptional invitations; and in every place where such messages are heard, the will of "our Father which art in Heaven" is made known.

Therefore if God inspires and commands such reasoning with those who, having been duly made

members of Christ, have not continued such; in a word, if God directly or indirectly urges unworthy Christians to realize their perilous position, His doing so carries with it the hope that if they heed, they may still avert the danger pointed out to them, and give themselves to better counsels.

God's action can only be the doing of a friend who exhorts and warns in time; and not that of an enemy who uses a cruel duplicity in order to mock at man's despair.

But beside this blessed and well grounded hope, this promise by implication, we have expressed assurances of the fullest and most satisfying character.

It is a patent law of God's dealing with men that where we can do nothing, nothing is demanded; but when anything is to be done for which God has given us talents or capacity in the slightest degree, then coöperation on our part is looked for. In other words, we are only to pray for the granting to us of objects which lie still beyond us, after our whole energy has been exerted in their direction and has proved itself insufficient. We must not stretch our arm over unused power within ourselves to appropriate that of Heaven. The man in the parable who stands as the type

of this kind of religion, and who kept his talent wrapped up in a napkin instead of using it to the best advantage, met with conspicuous condemnation.

§ 76.

And with regard to the expressed promise of forgiveness to sinning Christians, we find that man desiring forgiveness of his sins is himself first expected *to do* something towards that end—to do what he can. *He must forgive his brother*; and only on the fulfilment of this condition, look for the granting of his own prayer for pardon. Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ says (St. Matt. vi. 14): “If ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you.”

That the promise is thus conditional, only means that it is real and valid. This is the only form in which it could be expressed to be of any use to us. Any otherwise it would be an evidence of building without regard to the character of the foundation; of building possibly on the sand, or, worse, on a shifting morass of sinful mindedness.

When we see the kind of structure—the only conceivable one—that is reared on such unsuitable ground, we cannot wonder that God refuses to countenance this species of spiritual architecture.

The parable of The Unmerciful Servant sup-

plies the faithful picture of this kind of building, and nobody has ever been known to be attracted by it.

§ 77.

Our Lord says again: "And when ye stand praying, forgive if ye have aught against any, that your Father also which is in Heaven may forgive your trespasses. But if ye do not forgive, neither will your Father which is in Heaven forgive your trespasses."

There is a wholesomeness about the commands of God which show them to be, to the observing, something more than the arbitrary requirements of the Governor of the universe.

The more we know of them, the readier we are to acknowledge that the name by which we are Divinely instructed to address the Almighty is no religious unreality, but one that cordially invites us to fill it with deepest and truest meaning.

The great laws of God in religion, like His other laws which bid us satisfy our hunger by eating and our weariness by rest, are only the wisest preservatives of our most priceless and present interests.

We have said that the knowledge of earthly fathers is a relationship which, by a magic of its

own, is not unknown to transform hard obedience into a sense of sweet mysterious wisdom. But if we do not *know* that the man who commands us is our father, and have only been told it, the naked law of self-preservation alone would go far towards making us refuse to trust ourselves to ways of which we are ignorant, and into whose design, good and profit to us may not enter. The requirement that we shall forgive our brother is open to this misconception. In looking upon this fundamental law of God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ as a stern "eye-for-an-eye" enactment, a thing after conscience's own heart, we altogether lose sight of its splendid usefulness to us.

The infinite difficulty (of which more later) of beings constituted as we are, with conscience dealing out inexorable justice to us, believing in the forgiveness of sins, is wondrously lessened by one downright act of forgiveness on our part. For the argument it supplies is electrical, and opens up a luminous way to belief in God's forgiveness of us, and this is the argument: I, a sinful man, have held myself well in hand, and completely forgiven a deliberate wrong, viciously done against myself, and I have also further dutifully prayed for the doer. What is possible to a nature like mine, is easily possible to God. The

reality of my true act gives me appreciation of the reality of God's.

§ 78.

In addition to these promises of the Saviour, we have the passage in St. James (v. 14, 15): "Is any sick among you? Let him call for the elders of the Church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord, and the prayer of faith shall save the sick and the Lord shall raise him up, and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him." These, and many other portions of Holy Scripture, show the foundation and warranty there is for the Church's belief in the forgiveness of sins after Baptism.

But besides implied and expressed promises of forgiveness, there is one incident in the gospel history which puts the matter before our eyes in a way that entirely convinces us, riveting upon the memory, by every feature of the occasion, our conviction of the forgiveness of sins in the case of baptized Christians.

When Peter with curses and swearing consummated that terrible sin of his, it is said our Lord looked at him; but that look, though charged with unutterable sorrow and some reproof, was not the flashing of eternal condemnation upon the fallen

apostle. So far was this from being the case, that we find the same apostle, after this, enjoying the undoubted approval and favor of his Lord.

In the final scene in St. John's gospel, where the resurrection appearances of our Lord are vividly given, it is to St. Peter who thrice denied his Saviour, that Jesus turns, and, as if in significant yet merciful reference to that defection, thrice asks the question, "Lovest thou Me?" Then, on the confession of loyal affection three times asserted, the Lord gives him his apostolic commission, not only as fully as any other of the apostles received it, but in language about which there clings something that would seem to indicate a peculiar tenderness and confidence; "Feed My sheep"; "Feed My lambs."

"St. Peter's denial, his repentance, and his being restored to his apostolical dignity, seem to be recorded partly on this account: to encourage us even after the most heinous offences, to return to God, and never to reckon our condition desperate, were our sins ever so many, but as we find our hearts hardened in them into an obstinate impenitency." (Bishop Burnet.)

The work of proving that there are in Scripture abundant grounds for the general hope of man's forgiveness at the hands of God, is of course not

at all our present business; but the quite difficult task of learning how far that hope is to be authoritatively extended to those who have sinned wilfully after regeneration and birth by Baptism into the family and household of God.

In continuance of this momentous inquiry we shall only briefly refer to the following few out of numerous passages of Scripture that make for hopefulness even here:

(1) Our Lord's parable of the Prodigal Son, which shows us a son of the household going widely wrong, and upon repentance being restored.

(2) The power given to the Church (Matt. xviii. 15, 18), to bind and to loose in the case of offending and repenting Christians.

(3) The exercise of this power by the Church at Corinth in the case of the member who was guilty of incest, and who by St. Paul's mandate was excommunicated and afterwards restored, "lest he should be swallowed up by overmuch sorrow."

(4) St. Paul's enlargement of this action into a general rule enjoined upon the Galatians: "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted" (Gal. vi. 1).

(5) Even the case of Simon Magus is in point, for just after he was baptized, St. Peter pronounced him to be in "the gall of bitterness and the bond of iniquity." Yet his case was not considered hopeless, for the apostle urged him to repent of his wickedness and pray God if perhaps the thought of his heart might be forgiven him.

(6) When we reflect upon the character of the Christian covenant, as far outstripping the ancient covenant in mercy and true helpfulness; and when we remember that under that less gracious regimen, David, after repentance, was restored even after the commission of such sins as murder and adultery in their most heinous forms, we cannot need a very elaborate demonstration of the fact that the kingdom of grace does not shut out hope from the children of God, who, having lapsed into sin, seek again forgiveness at His hands.

(7) The insertion by our Blessed Lord of the petition in the Lord's Prayer which asks, "Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive them that trespass against us," taken in conjunction with the foregoing consideration, is enough to settle every scruple on the matter of the possibility of obtaining forgiveness for sins committed by the baptized.

§ 79.

Our Lord has made our pardoning the offences

of others against us the measure of His forgiving us our trespasses, and thus illustrates His meaning and purpose in making that petition an integral part of the Lord's Prayer; and when one asked Him: "Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me and I forgive him: till seven times?" He replied that the forgiveness was not to be extended to an offending brother seven times only; but that the limit was only reached when we have forgiven him four hundred and ninety times, and all this in one single day. If our brother's offences should reach this huge number, yet if he still turn and repent, we are bound to forgive him.

Now if our Lord makes this the condition and the extent of God's forgiveness of us, and bids the children of God draw on the treasury of Divine forgiveness by the use of the Lord's Prayer, we are not warranted by any conceivable argumentation or exegesis of other portions of Scripture, in lessening the mercies of God to that portion of the race whom He has predestinated to Church privileges and opportunities.

But what about the dreadful passages of the New Testament, it will be asked, which so violently oppose this lenient hopefulness?

In seeking to satisfy this query we must put ourselves back through centuries, and side by side

with the apostles and writers of the New Testament.

Sin, to their eyes, has its range as it has in our own experience, from indiscretion to deadliest crime. But the lapses of Christians of to-day do not suggest very readily *the great lapse*, which, from the nature of the case, was ever present to the minds of the first disciples, namely, a formal abjuration of the religion of Christ, and a return to that of heathenism and its idols, or to Judaism.

The strongest passages of all those that can be arrayed against the hope of forgiveness for baptized Christians who dishonor their Christian vows, are to be found in the Epistle to the Hebrews:

“For it is impossible for those who were once *enlightened* and have tasted of the *heavenly gifts* and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, if they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put Him to an open shame. For the earth which drinketh in the rain that cometh oft upon it, and bringeth forth herbs meet for them by whom it is dressed, receiveth blessing from God; but that which beareth thorns and briars is rejected, and is

nigh unto cursing; whose end is to be burned" (Heb. vi. 4-8).

And further on in the same Epistle:

"Let us hold fast the profession of our Faith without wavering (for He is faithful that promised) . . . not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together as the manner of some is: but exhorting one another: and so much the more as ye see the day approaching. For if we *sin wilfully* after that we have received *the knowledge of the truth*, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins; but a certain fearful looking for of judgment, and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries.

"He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses: Of how much sorer punishment suppose ye shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the spirit of grace? . . . But call to remembrance the former days in which after ye were *illuminated* (baptized) ye endured a great fight of afflictions . . . Now the just shall live by faith, but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him. But we

are not of them who *draw back unto perdition*, but of them who believe unto the saving of the soul."

Both of these strong passages refer to the crowning sin of *Apostasy*, and the ceremonial renunciation of Christianity for Judaism; and should not be used by careless handlers of the word of God as if these utterances of the apostle could be conveniently coupled on to any and every ordinary sin that daily dogs our footsteps.

"The words in the Epistle to the Hebrews," says Bishop Burnet, "do plainly import those who, being not only baptized, but having also *received a share of the extraordinary effusion of the Holy Ghost*, had totally renounced the Christian religion, and apostatized from the faith, which was a crucifying of Christ anew.

"Such apostates to Judaism were thereby involved in the crime and guilt of the crucifying of Christ, and the putting Him to open shame.

"Now persons so apostatizing, could not be renewed again by repentance, it not being possible to do anything towards their conviction that had not already been done: and they hardening themselves against all that was offered for their conviction, were arrived at such a degree of wickedness that it was impossible to work upon them. There

was nothing left to be tried, that had not been already tried and proved to be ineffectual."

§ 80.

The fifth chapter of St. John's first Epistle, which speaks of a "sin not unto death" which may obtain forgiveness, and of "a sin unto death" for which we are not advised to pray, culminates with clearness and force in the last verse: "Little children, keep yourselves from idols," and speaks throughout as unmistakably of apostasy to heathenism, as the forbidding passages in the Epistle to the Hebrews do of apostasy from the faith of Christ to Judaism.

Now it will be seen at once that these portions of Holy Scripture are not easily applicable to the lives of baptized men and women of to-day. In fact, dealing as they do with apostasy alone, they are not even to be applied to all times and kinds of apostasy itself.

It was the severe error of the Novatians to make no difference in extent of guilt between those who denied the faith by lapsing into idolatry in the third century under the terrible persecutions of the Emperor Decius; and those in the first century who, having received the wondrous outpouring of the Holy Ghost, and the extraordinary gifts and powers that accompanied it, deliberately

turned their backs upon all this light, and without equal stress of circumstances, reëmbred their native darkness.

Thus the schismatic Novatian and his numerous followers in the third century (for he may justly be called the first anti-pope), though they erred in severity while acting from the legitimate motive that the Church ought to use great caution about reëdmitting lapsed idolators back into her fold, are not to be charged with the modern error of applying these passages of Scripture to any other sin amongst Christians than that which was in the minds of the inspired writers—the capital sin of Apostasy.

§ 81.

Of the “sin unto death” of which St. John speaks, we have now the data for framing a definition: it is this formal spurning of the Christian Creed, after endowment with the miraculous gifts of the Holy Spirit (the sin of apostasy mentioned in Heb. vi.); and the “sin not unto death” for which the apostle bids us pray, would seem plainly to be all the other sin that flesh is heir to, since only this one phase or kind above mentioned is excepted.

The words of St. John in the third chapter of his first epistle—“He that committeth sin is of

the devil, and whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin and cannot sin because he is born of God"—must be understood in the larger and wider sense of our not permitting ourselves in the deliberate practice of known sins.

§ 82.

The great guilt, however, of Christians sinning against grace, in the beaten paths of ordinary vice, is not in anywise minimized or left to an obscure position in the Scriptures.

St. Paul declares that "if any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy, for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are"; and demands further of the same Christians: "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the Kingdom of God?"

"Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolators, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the Kingdom of God. And such were some of you; but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God."

He ends this uncompromising declaration with the exclamation: "What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in

you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?"

§ 83.

Of the sin of "blasphemy against the Holy Ghost," which our Lord solemnly declares to be beyond the pale of Divine pardon either in this world or in the world to come, we may observe that it is a *state of mind* rather than a single act of sin; a state of such awfulness that our Lord does not actually charge it against even those cavilling Pharisees (Matt. xii. 22-32) who impiously and in defiance of all true evidence, attributed the work of God the Holy Ghost to Beelzebub, the prince of the devils.

The temptation to this sin was peculiar to the time of our Lord and His apostles, when all that the wisdom, power, and love of God could do was done, as it never was before or since, to reclaim the perverted minds of men to truth.

To deliberately and determinedly stifle conviction in the presence of all this, exhausting the resources of Heaven only to condemn them, and in spite of the human understanding itself to remain an enemy to truth and light—this state of mind, totally inconceivable to our minds in the case of sane people, is the unpardonable sin of blasphemy against the Holy Ghost. "All things of extreme

severity in a doctrine that is so full of grace and mercy as the gospel is, ought to be restrained as much as may be. From thence we infer that those dreadful words of our Saviour ought to be restrained to the subject to which they are applied, and ought not to be carried further. Since miracles have ceased, no man is any more capable of this sin" (Bishop Burnet).

We may therefore conclude, says Bishop Harold Browne, that "severe as some passages of Scripture are against those who sin wilfully against light and grace, and strict as the discipline of the early Church was against all such offenders, there is yet nothing to prove that heinous sin, committed after Baptism, cannot be pardoned on repentance. The strongest and severest texts in Scripture seem to apply not to persons who have sinned, and seek repentance; but to Apostates from the faith, who are stout in their apostasy and hardened in sin."

CHAPTER VII.

REPENTANCE.

§ 84.

WHEN we look at the Christian world, and see that even amongst the regenerate, the majority, perhaps, are on the wrong side of the line which we have drawn between amiable godlessness and essential Christianity, we are not to conclude that the work of the Saviour is a failure.

The sin of our first parents in Paradise was, as with us, a calamity which lay beyond the power of man to right; but with the baptized world whom we again led captive, it is not so.

That sin exists to a large extent after Baptism is enough to sober men to the great struggle with them, but it must not dishearten. This sin which mars the life of Christians, and which throws the faint hearted into despair, what

is it after all but the temporary, transient supremacy of the old nature over the new, the victory for the moment of the flesh over the spirit, the death struggle, it may even be, of the Atonement principle within man?

For any case, all is not lost for Christianity. This warfare is what every soldier of Christ is instructed to expect throughout the whole course of that warfare which opens to him at his Baptism.

Between the hosts of baptized men and women, therefore, who, consciously or unconsciously, do not wage the battle they solemnly vowed to wage against the misleading principle of the old man within them, between this large section of the world and the world's Saviour, there is a path provided for returning feet; a bridge which Divine mercy ever guards and leaves open for the culpable of deserters.

This bridge is repentance.

The apostles ever point to it. The Saviour Himself locates it in a manner deserving the attention and gratitude of every man and woman who would be called a rational, thinking being.

§ 85.

In considering its nature, we meet with a misconception which claims a place, and is welcomed within the minds of a very large portion of mod-

ern Christians, viz., the making the return of an erring Christian to spring only from his thrilling and overpowering love for his Heavenly Father; and his experiencing an intense, insupportable agony at separation from Him.

If this teaching were true, it would place the great bulk of nominal Christians in a position which it is dreadful to contemplate; for as a great, perhaps the greater portion of them, never attain all at once, and before their return, to any condition of heart or mind which can honestly be said to resemble this, they are not unnaturally led to believe that no return is possible for them; at least for the present. This, of course, is said without ignoring the influence of the alluring myth, which makes its abode in the secret chambers of every human heart (unless challenged by an instructed faith)—the fond hope, that doubtless, no matter what the requirement is, or can be, which is to fit us for union with our Creator, a day will somehow come when a dimly conceived but fully credited good fortune will put us in possession of the needful qualification for eternal bliss. But for the present (and that is all we have to hope from, as it is also the only battle-ground on which our great enemy seeks his victories), there is a stolid conviction of the impossibility of return.

Now all this, though claiming to be, and by many accepted as Christian truth, is plainly antagonistic to the teaching of Christ.

No man who preaches or sanctions such doctrine, has any true warrant from Jesus Christ for his zeal.

§ 86.

Let us, for one moment, be close students of the manner in which our Lord and Saviour has done His gracious work, and dealt with the difficulty before us. He has not, we may be sure, proclaimed a bridge over this gulf without having actually secured a sure and certain retreat from all phases of unfaithfulness and desertion; and what He proclaims as a reality, we cannot, without the greatest impiety, reduce, or permit to be reduced, to a myth, such as is done very effectually by all who make the Saviour to demand *maturity in spirituality*, where He only invites a beginning; to demand, in short, a man's work from a child.

It cannot be too earnestly maintained, that the Saviour has made it wholly practicable for Christian people who fall into sin, possible even for those who unhappily have long continued its chained bondsmen, to return to His most holy ways, and to the peace-giving course of right: if only an officious and spurious dogmatism would allow His

gracious dealing with our sin-smitten race to have its sway.

§ 87.

In that priceless illustration, enshrined within the heart of the gospel—the parable of The Prodigal Son—humanity possesses the full and clear revelation of God's attitude toward all returning sinners, and perhaps especially toward repentant Christians—the returning sons of the household.

Here we find the lower, cosmical principle working on the impetuous impulses of youth, and leading the professed soldier of Christ captive, through the snare of skilfully chosen, inviting promises. Trusting to these promises of betterment, the son leaves his father's house—the telling picture of youth leaving the ways of God. Time ripens for the promises to bear fruit, but the harvest is disappointing; it is a famine.

And now frowning circumstances begin their sobering process, as all frowning circumstances in life are apt to do, for however short a period.

Observe, however, where the process takes place. It is the popular theology that to be of any the slightest value, this change or sobering must begin with the heart; that anything else is hypocrisy, and altogether unworthy of a moment's consideration.

And yet not one word in all this parable is said about the heart; not one word, that is, about the son's heart, though much about the father's.

When he could no longer feed on promises, and keen-toothed hunger gnawed, the son awoke to his true circumstances and prospects, or, in the pregnant words of the Saviour, "he came to himself."

§ 88.

Now if we stumbled on this story in another kind of literature, and at a time when we had no preconceived doctrine to make good, what could we say of the magnanimity of this young man's awakening? That he was overwhelmed with true filial love for his father? That irrespective of his present circumstances and necessities, a sudden longing for the sweet scenes of his childhood, for the endearments of home, and for the sound of his beloved father's voice, overcame and unmanned him to such an extent that he could no longer continue to remain at this heartless distance from such cherished objects of his affections?

Should we say all this of him? Or should we not rather say, simply, that he was destitute, and remembered that his father had plenty?

There can be no question as to what we should say: for we should express what we are alone

justified in thinking, namely, that the words, "he came to himself," mean, he came face to face with his own true interests; nothing more or less.

The loftiest disposition which this young man manifested by his awakening act, we should be compelled to acknowledge was nothing more than mere *sobriety*, evinced by a common-sense summing up of the situation, with the plain, well-grounded conviction carrying everything before it, *that he was the loser*.

To adorn this young man with all the qualities of godly sonship, revived in their sweetest odor, is to copy the example of those who in our day, though not yet in our country, make heroes of criminals, and decorate their prison cells with lavish offerings of flowers, making honest folk almost find it in their hearts to arraign the unbiased decisions of justice as monstrous inhumanity to man.

Those, likewise, who from some potent cause within themselves, of which perhaps they are unconscious, but of which we have glanced at the history, seek to rehabilitate the Prodigal, and erect him into a fountain of filial tears, must remember that they do so at the cost of lessening the gracious fatherliness of the Father, which is, beyond all mistaking, the great point of the Saviour's parable.

The famine—affliction, disappointment, the failure of hopes, the lessening of life's chances with the lessening of the sands of life, and the consciousness of unprofitableness overshadowing and pervading all—this is calculated to transform the dreaming, drifting prodigal of all ages, not indeed into an angel of tenderest sensibilities, but into the sober, thinking man; and our point is, that this at least is within the reach of all Christian people, who have "erred and gone astray" from the way to which they solemnly dedicated themselves at their Baptism.

And so the Saviour's bridge for such sinners, is a real bridge; one which they can actually cross; not a thing swung at an impossible elevation, nor one blocked by impassible barriers.

The Lord Jesus Christ therefore, in thus making this Prodigal Son, with qualities of heart and head so low on the scale of possibility, an instance of acceptable repentance, proclaims, and authorizes His duly commissioned ministry to proclaim, that if the heart be wanting in promptings to return to our heavenly Father's house and to our home, the head may, by the expenditure of as much energy as it requires to reckon up our bankruptcy, lawfully and fitly use the words originally voiced by a not very saintly soul: "I will arise and go

to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son; make me as one of thy hired servants;" and we have the fullest warranty for promising to every member of that vast class of which the Prodigal of the Gospel parable is the Divinely chosen type, the same gracious reception and pardon which the Prodigal himself experienced.

§ 89.

Repentance may thus be said, in the case of baptized persons, to be the dawn of sober sense upon a career sadly marred and distorted by the absence of it.

This dawn is acceptable to our Redeemer, because it gives the first restored glimpse of Him through the rising mists of worldliness and sin, so far as we can well trace it.

It is acceptable because it is the true beginning of the full, clear day.

This order of repentance, thus understood, coming first, and afterwards its maturer developments, is faithfully set forth in the verse:

"O give repentance true and deep
To all Thy lost and wand'ring sheep,
And kindle in their hearts the fire
Of holy love and pure desire."

But the difference between the dawn and the day is not more real and indisputable, than that between the incipient acceptable repentance of the Prodigal, and repentance in the fullest and most mature state.

§ 90.

Now, in commonly discoursing of Repentance, it is most natural that the fuller idea should to a large extent monopolize the whole use of the term, just as when the name Napoleon is mentioned or referred to without further specification, we usually think of the greatest personage who was known by that name in history, that is, of its founder, though there are at least two other world-known princes who bear the very same designation.

But this tendency of the busy world to use a word in its strongest sense, must not be permitted to betray us into the error of believing this sense to be exhaustive, and the only legitimate meaning.

The voice of the multitude may go for much in imposing its summary decisions, it may oblige us for the most part to think of the full light of noon-day when it speaks of daylight; but the weary watchers of the night (the picket on a kopje in South Africa, for instance), must not be brow-beaten into a confession of misapprehension, for believing that that which they see appearing in

grey streaks on the horizon is the actual approach of day.

For whatever we call it, the important fact remains that the end of the night has come. Another period of time has emerged. And certain it is, that no noontide has ever come, or can come to us, without such a preceding and heralding dawn.

We must therefore take due cognizance of this essential consideration.

If we happen to be asleep when the light begins its diurnal course, if we are familiar with no earlier clearness than that of a sun high in the heavens, we must not advance our experience which only means lack of observation and of accurate and accessible knowledge, as conclusive evidence that no such earlier light has any real existence.

When we talk of life with all its joys and sorrows, we oftenest mean that sphere of action in which grown persons only participate: but yet no dispute can arise as to whether children and infants have a just claim to a part in illustrating the meaning of that word.

This is but another instance of how a portion of the meaning of a word often arrogates to itself the entire term. And further, as we must not

deny to this repentance of the Prodigal, which so forcibly suggests the dawn, the full registration of actuality and preciousness; so also we must not occupy ourselves with dogmatizing as to which of the two states—the lesser or the fuller repentance—is the more deserving and appreciable in God's sight.

In that sheet-anchor for the shifting meaning of the word Repentance—the parable of the Prodigal Son—our Blessed Lord has plainly given us to know that He accepts the naked second thought, all unattired and unadorned as it may be. The garments do not make this child; and here, too, "the body is more than raiment."

The goodness of God lead to repentance (Rom. ii. 4), and whether this be the new-born babe of repentance, or that babe grown to fulness of stature, the thing is the same, though we refer to it at different periods of its development.

§ 91.

Repentance then means a change of mind on reflection; taking another and riper view of things of the supremest moment to us as rational beings.

The pitiless inadequacy of that teaching which barricades the road left open by Christ Himself, for the return of those who are becoming, through

the instrumentality of circumstances—those unhoused preachers of God—disenchanted with all godless schemes of happiness, is seen plainly in the light of the fact that here alone, in this short, fleeting, uncertain life, is offered to us the one and only sphere wherein the mercy of the Saviour is designed to operate for our salvation, and wrap us to Himself. Once the curtain falls on this life's brief day and hides us from our kindred, the patient, crucified Saviour ceases forever to be such, and is transformed into the Judge Eternal, before whom we must stand on our own slender merits, if we have neglected, from any cause *or misapprehension*, to draw upon His. "We must all stand before the judgment seat of Christ."

God, having committed His Church into the hands of men and not of angels, well knowing what was in man, this consciousness on the part of the Christian priesthood, of responsibility, wedded to an inherent liability to err, ought to make us alive in every fibre of our being, to the awfulness of excluding the sunshine and the rain from this delicate flower which may at any time spring forth from the ruins and the rubbish of a mis-spent life. "Whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in Me, it were better for him, that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were

drowned in the depth of the sea" (St. Matt. xviii. 6).

§ 92.

If those who are sure of their right (because of *mission* rather than of *merit*) with its accompanying assured grace (St. Matt. xxviii. 19, 20), to undertake the cure of souls, are guilty of thus increasing the difficulties of the Prodigal's return, they must answer the momentous charge at the proper time.

But the mind reels at the temerity of those who break through all order, human and Divine, to clothe themselves with power only to shorten the arm of God stretched out to rescue a lost race—these Uzzahs (II. Sam. vi.), whose good intentions have secured them the world's seal of Ordination, in default of Christ's and His apostles'.

§ 93.

We have now to see how this concept of the attitude which God requires in all those who approach Him, agrees with that which the Church outlines in her confessions.

(1) In the general Confession, in the offices for Morning and Evening Prayer, the first words that break on the ear show that the compilers of our Book of Common Prayer had in their minds the model of repentance supplied them and us by

our Blessed Lord Himself, in the parable of the Prodigal Son.

The familiar words, "We have erred and strayed from Thy ways like lost sheep, we have followed too much the devices and desires of our own hearts"; the tutored addressing of God as "Father," and "most merciful," are all suggestive of the pattern upon which they were framed, and that is the Saviour's idea of the approach of sinful man to God's footstool.

This is appointed as the fit language of all sorts and conditions of men, who come where two or three are gathered together in His name. It is the border-language of the Church, open to the honest use of all who are tired of the husks of the world.

It is characterized by the absence of all fervor, and is intended to be the plain, matter-of-fact, sober acknowledgment of mistake, and consequent loss. It is the very mirror of our Lord's revealed mind on this point, utterly untouched by learned theological opinion, as it is unsullied by any other species of human exaggeration.

It may seem to some, that in this presentation of the sinner's return to God, too little account has been taken of the feelings, and the part they play in conversion.

But it must not be inferred that, because nothing has been said of them as essential so far as ordinary eyes can see, to the "coming to" oneself, they are therefore utterly cast aside as either chimerical or unworthy of notice. So far from this, they are indeed both a great reality, and a spiritual luxury: but impoverished souls must not expect to make such banqueting their daily diet.

This is not all the ordinary food of soldiers of Christ on active service: and the palate must not be permitted to expect it as such. It is rather the counterpart of the royal box of chocolate sent to our soldiers in Africa, not their daily ration; and no soldier was known to misunderstand the Queen's gift. In fact there are those who, because of the extraordinary delightfulness which in addition to its actuality it possesses, would warn us that this glowing emotion, like the angel of light, is sometimes counterfeited by the Evil One. The author of the *Spiritual Combat** has the following:

"Sensible devotion arises sometimes from nature, sometimes from the devil, and sometimes from grace. You will be able from its fruit to discern its source; since if it does not produce amendment of life, your only doubt will be

* Lawrence Scupoli, Chap. IIx.

whether it proceeds from the devil or from nature, and especially if it is accompanied by a greater relish and sweetness and attachment, and a certain self-esteem. When therefore you shall feel your mind filled with spiritual sweetness, do not stop to dispute about the source from whence it comes: and do not lean upon it nor suffer yourself to be taken off from the thought of your own nothingness; but with greater diligence and hatred of self, study to keep your heart free from all attachment, even to spiritual things, and seek God alone, and His good pleasure; for in this way the delight—whether it spring from nature or from the devil—will be changed into an effect of grace to you. . . . Dryness may likewise proceed from these three causes—from the devil—from ourselves—from grace.”

But of the place which our feelings occupy in the sphere of Christianity, more anon.

(2) In the office for the Holy Communion there is a noticeable difference in the language of the Confession, a difference which agrees with the idea of repentance that we are her endeavoring to set forth.

In the Confession in the Liturgy, the suppliant is not, as in the other form of Confession, the travel-stained wanderer from purlieus of the

world; but the son on whom the robe, and shoes, and ring of paternal providence, have become familiar objects and evidences of love. The heightening and deepening of feeling in the utterances here, can need no explanation. That the repentance now should be earnest, and that the wrong-doing should generate "heartly sorrow," and give rise to "remembrances" "grievous to be borne," "intolerable," is as natural as that the grey dawn should broaden and deepen into the warmth of noonday.

CHAPTER XIII.

§ 94.

HOLY COMMUNION (INTRODUCTORY).

THE danger here has, for too long, been that of digging too deep. If the gold is on or near the surface, surely it is nothing less than absurd to keep on delving to the centre of the earth; as if nothing can be done in this universe which God has made and sustained alone through all the ages, without man's achieving it.

Doomed to gain our bread by the sweat of our brow, the race seems unable to view any prospect, except through the fume and dust of this inevitable travail.

From the pit which this holy theme has been to them, theologians have thrown up an immense amount of matter. But it has for the most part remained where they left it—at the pit's mouth. Mankind has not noticeably lessened the huge bulk

by any eager appropriation. Accepting the estimates of the various miners, the world of Christians has been interested enough to quarrel over the nature and value of what giant labor has brought to the surface, but they have not taken it away.

If this is so, it plainly means that the men and women who compose the Church of God in the world, are not as rich, in the highest riches, as they might be; and who shall say that if they were, there would to-day be any "world" outside the Church? For all that is desirable would then be attributed to its rightful author, and the residue, stripped of the borrowed colors of heaven, and shining in its own sinister light, would become a beacon to the souls of men, not an allurements.

§ 95.

Men of clear heads and sound hearts, who grapple with the various problems of life and overcome their difficulties; who look far into the future and make effective calculations for their protection therein; and who, in every department and ramification of that God-given task of "subduing the earth," bear themselves with such credit, exhibiting in their methods the application of the profoundest policy—men with a record such as this, cannot be hastily charged with deliberate neglect, here. Men and women who intelligently

apply themselves to their interests in every other quarter, do not offer any presumptive evidence that in this matter—the greatest for which understanding has been given to man—of getting all the wealth out of the Lord's Supper that it possesses for them, they are criminally lax.

Under the high sanction of God, and of right sense, they have reverently entrusted this matter to the accredited Ministry of the Church. They have handed over this great interest of theirs to those who, according to the mind and institution of Christ, are appointed and expected to make the most of it for them, by at least keeping open and unobstructed, the prospect it offers.

What returns have been secured them? This is a fair, a necessary inquiry to be made of himself by even the humblest member of those who share the weighty responsibility.

§ 96.

It may be said, and with truth, that the returns are not slight; but the question is, has the most been made of that which has by God and man been committed to the Church? Has the reality, undiluted and unobserved, been laid bare to the needs of men? so presented that they may reach it, body and soul; and reaching it, may feel the full, rich satisfaction settle down upon intellect

and heart, leaving no place for a peradventure as to the actual benefit received?

To this interrogatory the answer is not forthcoming, or not what it ought to be.

The language in which the institution of this great sacrament is embodied, seems to satisfy, as to clearness, all the requirements of the Divine command given to the prophet Habakkuk: "Write the vision and make it plain upon tables *that he may run that readeth it;*" and yet there is nothing upon which the world is so much and so pitiously divided to-day, as it is in its conceptions of this great fundamental matter.

Christendom, not necessarily theologians, beholding Christ, loves Him, and believing that He is all He claims to be, expects its saving at His hands; and in the central fountain of refreshment which He so conspicuously instituted, and in which all that He is to us is gathered together and outpoured, it is permissible for it to manifest some degree of disappointment, if anything less than very real, appreciable revivication is given.

That this high requisite exists, and that the Saviour of men established it, there is with the great body of Christians and nominal Christians, equally with the learned, no manner of question.

And yet who is satisfied with the outcome?

With the chilling and awful spectacle which Christendom presents with its huge sections standing each aloof from the rest, and looking with no very marked kindliness on all who do not subscribe to its shaping of Divine truth? And, in one case, to its *theory* of a matter concerning which it is impiety to have any theory, especially if the acceptance of that theory be made the un-Christian condition of enjoying the untrammelled goodness of God?

This spectacle, doubtless, has much to do with the unsatisfactory condition of Christianity amongst us, as individuals, and explains to some extent the gap between the actual and the possible for each member of the body of Christ which is His Church (Eph. i. 22, 23; v. 23; Col. i. 24).

§ 97.

We have said that the putting of a theory of the way in which Christ's mercy is brought about for us, into the place of that mercy itself, is un-Christian; and this strong assertion is, we think, borne out by the following curt "analogy of religion to the constitution and course of nature," if we may borrow Bishop Butler's phrase; an analogy which has been violated by all such theorists, which we shall state in the form of a question: How ill would it agree with the broad

beneficence of the Almighty, upon which the world, and all therein have thriven ever since creation, if man were now to decree, that no single creature in all the earth should partake of the food which omnipotent Fatherhood has brought out of the earth by His inscrutable miracle of mercy, until that creature, of whatever order, shall have signed and attested a human theory of how that food is brought into being in the ground; that is to say, until such creature shall have sworn to belief in a *human explanation of growth*—a thing of which we know absolutely nothing? For science, with all its glorious triumphs, stands mute and ignorant in the presence of a blade of grass.

And yet, notwithstanding this universal ignorance, all His creatures, from the highest to the lowest, have continued to partake of what God has bountifully provided for their nourishment, and attained their full development without any such unnatural, arbitrary, and impoverishing legislation as this.

The bread upon tens of thousands of Christian tables is daily eaten with devout thankfulness to God, all the while no single being can anywhere amongst us be found to explain the familiar miracle it manifests.

We have noticed in another quarter the sad tendency to make difficult, if not impossible, that which our Lord Jesus Christ has made easy; and here we have a learned philosophy undertaking to fill out revelation and give us Transubstantiation (a concept as cumbrous as its title), where the Gospel only gives us the Body and Blood of Christ. Again we meet the human tendency—the reaching out to forbidden power to make another Gospel, a harder Gospel—and all from zeal for God.

§ 98.

Is not this just what we should have been led to expect, if Christ our Saviour had deposited His full, adequate treasury of merit, His remedy for lost humanity, that is to say, “the Bread of Life,” at the feet of the Scribes and Pharisees, the learned heads of the Jewish Church; and enjoined them to elaborately manufacture it in their mill into fitness for the people, according to Scribal and Pharisaical ideas of fitness?

But this is so far from being the course pursued by our Blessed Lord, that it is the very opposite of His Divine action in the matter.

Our Saviour never designed that His direct teaching should filter through the schools of Hillel and Shammai to the souls of men.

The very men, and class of men, whom He

chose as His standard bearers, show us that what He brought to the salvation of the race, required no finishing at the hands of scholarship.

There is indeed a time and a place for erudition, but it is not here.

That it has not feared to tread here, however, and that a deadening of Christianity has consequently ensued, are two dreadful facts which ought to make us all more careful to distinguish between the work of Jesus Christ, and the work of men in the Kingdom of God.

That which theologians are able to explain utterly, they may almost be expected to produce.

Theologians could not save us in our lost condition.

Their efforts therefore, so far as what mankind stood so terribly in need of is concerned, come too late. They must not attempt to do too much for us now.

Our theology ought only to seek to be the art of preventing obscurations of the Saviour, His words and His work; like a constabulary force in the stricken camp of Israel, who might have been effective in keeping clear of thronging multitudes and of obstructions of all kinds, the line of vision between the brazen serpent and the eyes of the most distant sufferer.

But what insanitary region of the human intellect or imagination could (without the aid of subsequent Christian history) have evolved the picture of a fellow-sufferer, a human priest, standing obtrusively in front of this immediate mercy to gasping myriads, the brazen serpent, and ruthlessly exercising what to him was his rightful function, of not only explaining fully, and to the level of the meanest capacity, how the Divine miracle was wrought; but by demanding from each perishing Israelite, his sworn *assent to this explanation* before the sufferer could hope to gain the healing which God, in His infinite mercy, meant him to have direct by merely looking without knowing or at least understanding?

How inipious, how awful a thing can misplaced learning, backed by preponderating ecclesiastical authority, become! *And how easily!* Especially in such an age of ignorance as that in which Transubstantiation took its rise.

The savants of our Lord's time were not taken into any partnership or collaboration with Christ. The sufficiency of the Saviour for the task that lay before Him, and in the presence of which the scholar and the boor were fused, undistinguishable, in the general mass of human impotency, is the dominant fact of the Gospel.

Our Lord who knew what He required, passed this class by. Their special services were not wanted.

The apostles were chosen. The equipment of these servants was that they were merely honest men. Their task was to tell what they saw, and to repeat what they heard.

They were sturdy, masculine witnesses. They were never at any time analytical experts. Through the noble service they rendered their Lord, and mankind, we see Christ plainly.

If Jesus Christ condescended to explain His acts, we have the explanation. Where no such explanation was vouchsafed, the apostles have ventured upon none.

They did not presume to demonstrate how the Saviour did His great works; they merely declared that He did them, and described the wonders that were equally patent to all the others who beheld them.

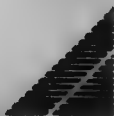
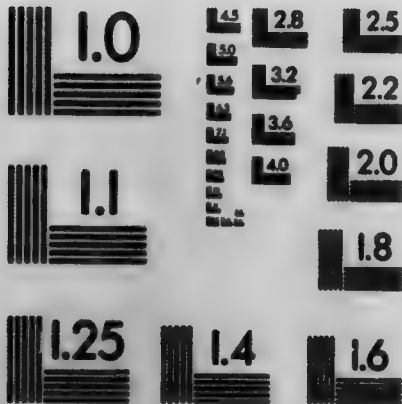
§ 99.

From our standpoint as Churchmen, we have on the one hand this earthborn intrusiveness, entering where angels might fear to tread, and undertaking to expound to us each stage of the process by which the Redeemer fulfils His words, "This is My body." And failing, as such temer-



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ity ever must, to produce intellectual conviction of the truest kind, from vigorous minds who pursue truth and truth only wherever it leads, force* is introduced (and that of a kind foreign to the whole method of the Saviour), to hold together the parts of a non-human argument, which is elaborated expressly to satisfy distinctively human inquiries.

On the other hand we have a revulsion of feeling produced by this strange gospel, leading other thousands to believe that they are called upon, as it would seem, not so much to attain to a just appreciation of what Christ designs for them, as to out-root this monstrous error.

These therefore, since they must first do their work of destruction, tell us that there is nothing to explain in the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, simply, they say, because nothing extraordinary or wonderful has any part in the matter; and so these, too, fail to satisfy hungering and expectant humanity, which will not readily believe that there is, in our Lord's words instituting this Sacrament, nothing more than the highly-wrought language of intense spirituality.

If we may again refer to growth in the natural world, whatever we may say about it, it is certainly a fact, agreed to by all. The man who,

* Note G.

after six thousand years of the world's confessed failure, professes to explain this fact to us, and proceeds to beat us if we do not conscientiously accept his explanation, is a hard schoolmaster indeed; while he who, recoiling from this severity, strives to befriend us by telling us that growth is a sheer delusion, may exhibit kindly qualities of heart, but his head disqualifies him for the guideship he has *assumed*.

CHAPTER XIV.

HOLY COMMUNION (THE MOSAIC SACRIFICES).

§ 100.

IN ENDEAVORING to attain to a just view of the Holy Communion, it will be necessary to look a little into some preliminary matters, and among them, first, to see if there was anything at all similar in the ancient Church of God among the Jews.

The unity of the Bible, the oneness of the Old Testament with the New, is in no wise more evinced than by the way in which the Jewish Sacrifices prepare mankind for the Great Sacrifice of Christ upon the cross; and the very real manner in which the Passover foreshadows the Lord's Supper.

In this respect, preëminently, the law was our "schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ."

We cannot picture to our minds any conception of the Jewish Church throughout its long history, without giving a central place to, and focussing all the religious aspirations of the people, so far as outward expression goes, in, their Sacrifices .

The solemnity which attached to these, and the reverent, trustful manner in which both priests and people performed the parts that fell to each, in the observance of the several sacrificial feasts, can escape no one; and in the economy of God, was intended to escape no one.

§ 101.

It is not too far from the mark for the ordinary busy man of to-day to summarize and grasp, as at least a vigorous outline of things ancient and Jewish, that the religion of the first people of God was one wherein praise to Jehovah took a body to itself in the shape of fragrant incense; and prayer, in the equally physical embodiment of a smoking sacrifice.

They were instructed to believe that in the due performance of certain sacrifices, by duly authorized servants of God, and in their attendance at and reliance upon those sacrifices, the taking away of their sins was effected.

They clung to, and at no inconsiderable cost maintained, these sacrifices, and the *instrumenta* of worship, for no other reason and with no less hope, than that they were the means, sanctioned, appointed, and commanded by Jehovah Himself, whereby their sins should be obliterated and utterly taken away.

This was the Jewish mind on this, the greatest subject that occupied the mind of a Jew.

And one bred in this reput'le faith, and fully conversant with it, but who had been further called by God into the marvellous light of the Gospel, witnesses that the Jews were deluded by no earth-born dream.

In the very connection, however, in which this testimony is given, our Christian Jew utters the paradox which sums up the whole matter that lies immediately before us: the explanation of which paradox puts things in the fullest and clearest light.

St. Paul is this witness at once to the Divine warranty for the hope of the Jews in their Mosaic Sacrifices, and to the inherent powerlessness of those sacrifices in and by themselves, to take away sin.

So firm is the great apostle in his belief that those sacrifices were efficacious, that he bases the

prevailing force of the Sacrifice of Christ on the likeness it bore to the Jewish Sacrifices.

These are St. Paul's words: "For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ" (Heb. ix. 13).

This is indisputable endorsement of the Jewish Sacrifices without any qualification whatever, as to the extent to which these institutions of God transcend the vulgar apprehension.

But in the very next breath St. Paul says emphatically, that these sacrifices regarded in and by themselves are impotent and useless.

His words are unmistakable: "For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year, continually make the comers thereto perfect. For then would they not have ceased to be offered. Because that the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins . . . for it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins" (Heb. x. 1-4).

Here the strained reason is relieved by an assertion which comforts, because of its full natural agreement with our ordinary perceptions. And

now what are we to do in the face of this contradiction: the blood of bulls and of goats takes away sins; and the blood of bulls and of goats does not take away sins?

§ 102.

The first thing we notice about this paradox of St. Paul's is that the inspired writer himself saw it, and gave it the greatest prominence, with every perceptible intention of making the contradiction a lash for the laggard spiritual discernment of his Jewish countrymen.

As though he had said, Once take a low, materialistic view of your sacrifices, and you are reduced to the most pitiable plight.

There must therefore be a higher significance about these sacrifices of bulls and goats, than their cost in shekels, their weight, their unblemished condition, and the minutiae with which the solemn offering up and eating were conducted by the priests.

They stood in the place at least of the real cause of the remission of the sins of men.

These sacrifices were to pass current as worth the full value before God of the trust that was reposed in them.

Men were not only inclined to read on the face of them the Divine sanction for hope and con-

fidence in them, but a command, well understood as unmistakably given from heaven, was known to lie upon all the nation to accept these and to offer them as mysterious indeed, but nevertheless as real payment in full for their delinquencies before the law.

And now when St. Paul says that these were at once the means of taking away sins, and in their nature incapable of taking away sins, he must mean that an added value was given them by God, which if kept in view explained how they could be instrumental in taking away sins; yet if ignored, leaves them poor, slaughtered cattle and nothing more.

§ 103.

Now we are bound to cast about us and search among the common things of daily experience, if we know of any similar case, where a thing may be said to be and yet not to be the article it professes to be. A business community will have no difficulty in discovering that a bank-note occupies this position exactly.

One man may call a bank-note money, another man may deny that it is money, and yet both be right in a good and honest sense.

Of the dollar bill it may be said, that it has the power of remitting to the extent of the demand

written on its face, any money debt for the payment of which it is offered. And yet a man may justly refuse to accept it as money, urging that it is at best only the promise of money.

But we all understand how the paradox is solved and the confusion allayed.

If therefore we retain this familiar idea of the dollar bill, its value, and its intrinsic worthlessness, and come with this imagery ready at hand to aid us in straightening out the matter St. Paul so forcibly lays before us, we shall understand him thoroughly, and estimate accurately and intelligently the office and efficacy of the Jewish Sacrifices.

As every bank-note or bill, which we commonly hand over to pay for the goods we purchase, has value only in so far as it faithfully represents a certain amount of gold which may be had on presentation of the note if required; so the sacrifices of the Jewish Church acquire their value and effectiveness in buying the remission of sins, if we may so speak, in as much as they are the promissory notes of Him who cannot lie. They bear His sign-manual, and guarantee that the gold of true atonement shall be forthcoming in the sacrifice upon the cross of Jesus Christ, the Son of God—the Saviour of the world.

§ 104.

Until that time arrives, the sacrifices shall pass as the accredited currency of heaven.

As soon, however, as the Messiah comes, and the true offering is made, all these shall be called in, their full face value registered, and their purchasing power acknowledged and honored to the uttermost.

But their spiritual value as auxiliary instruments in the remission of sins, is due to the voluntary act of God in choosing to use these, instead of any other impotent kind of thing, as material upon which to write His gracious intention.

Thus they may fearlessly be said to be at once able and powerless to take away sins, according to the way we regard them.

The blood of bulls and of goats as such, utterly without force or efficacy to wash away human guilt from God's sight, may nevertheless, since the Almighty has written His Divine and inviolable promise of pardon on them, be said without hesitation "to sanctify to the purifying of the flesh."

§ 105.

Now that this earth has received upon its surface that stupendous reality to which all the symbols of atonement pointed, we can readily perceive

that from this inexhaustible treasury of merit, all these ancient and regular Jewish drafts have been duly paid. And so the whole system of sacrifices known to the ancient people of God, and scrupulously maintained by them, commends itself even to Christian eyes as worthy of the wisdom, of the love and faithfulness, of God.

And here it may be said that we are under no obligation to believe that this view of the matter was altogether beyond Jewish apprehension. The one central and inspiring popular prospect of the Messiah could not be wholly dissociated from the solemnities of the atonement.

"No one could suppose that the slaying of the one goat or the sending of the other into the wilderness actually expiated the offences of the whole people. As individuals they were accustomed to bring costlier sacrifices for single transgressions, for involuntary transgressions, for transgressions against the merely ceremonial law; it was impossible for them to believe that the innumerable sins of all the people of Israel during a whole year could be truly atoned for by a comparatively insignificant offering.

"In this lay the safety of the whole service. Had they been permitted to bring individual sacrifices for individual offences against the moral law

—sacrifices offered at the cost of the individual offender—there would have been an irresistible tendency to regard the expiation as real and complete.

“But the two goats of the great day of Atonement were ~~provided~~ at the public cost; they did not impose burden upon a solitary individual amongst all the thousands of Israel; and yet they were to expiate innumerable offences. The symbolical character of the expiation could not fail to be recognized.”*

* Dr. Dale, *Jewish Temple and Christian Church*, page 199. Hodder & Stoughton.

CHAPTER XV.

HOLY COMMUNION (THE ATONEMENT).

§ 106.

WITH this view of the use and value of Jewish Sacrifices in our mind, we may turn for a moment to reflect on the reasonableness of the place which the Atonement has in our relationship to God.

We may perhaps best see it from the point of view of that too large class of persons who, continuing on in an irregular course of life, answer the appeals of conscience with the cheap (and we shall see how cheap) promise of living some day before death, as a true Christian ought to live.

If we would again refrain from too deep delving, and occupy ourselves with actualities pressing and present, we shall be led to take note of the extent to which this false promising is indulged, and

of how much spurious hope and confidence it is the parent.

God is right and I am wrong. God cannot change, and as the creature is meant to turn to the Creator, the change of attitude must take place in me. This I acknowledge. It must come; and when I finish this pursuit which now engrosses me, and to which I stand committed, I shall set my house in order, and live closely to the Christian rule of right.

Here this strange but too often perfectly satisfactory promise to self, complacently and with equal frequency, ends.

How many a genial soul sees himself wrapped up warmly and securely in "the baseless fabric" of this "vision", which, on close examination, everybody is convinced can only be begotten of a diseased brain; and which stands doubly doomed to disappointment, when we remember the fact witnessed to by the popular proverb, "Hell is paved with good intentions;" and again when we recognize, after some honest weighing of the matter, the sin against common sense which we incur by thinking that future rectitude, even when assured, can atone for past offences against the eternal law of righteousness.

§ 107.

A man has been running an account with his grocer for years, continually adding to his debt without making any payments. At last a change comes over him. Constraining circumstances, a remnant of conscience and of wholesome mindedness, induces him to recognize his injustice to this merchant in thus piling up an account beyond the point at which he could reasonably assure himself that it was within the limits of his prospects to pay the whole.

He will continue this procedure no longer. His household are informed of his new and creditable resolve, that henceforward every purchase made must be paid for, or failing this, the desired goods must be continently done without.

Now no matter to how full an extent we render the tribute of approval and praise to this domestic reform, we cannot elevate it into a full and satisfactory settlement of the long-standing and formidable account.

It does very well for the future, whenever we find ourselves confronted with that problem; but as regards the matter in hand, and as a settlement to date of past indebtedness, it has the serious fault of passing the whole thing by, and leaving the

bulky claim as undiminished and disturbing a reality as ever.

The good sense, which in every day business life is shocked by any such irrational notions as these, seems to be painfully absent from that fairy-world into which the religious moods of many persons lead them.

But Christianity is emphatically not a fairy-land in this sense. Effects are not produced in our holy religion and our relationship to God without efficient causes.

§ 108.

The religion of Christ does not warrant the simple and childish confidence that stern realities can at a breath, or as by some magic wand, be transformed into sheer nothingness, leaving no more trace of their existence than if they had never been.

The very unexplainableness of this fond belief, seems to render it attractive and acceptable to untutored minds; and many there are who, from the feeble use they make of their intellects in the service and worship of God, deserve to be judicially classed as untutored, no matter what their secular attainments may be; "for by their fruits we shall know them."

This merchant's bill cannot be settled by even the very best and sincerest resolution to be honest, and to pay as we go for the time to come.

Noble as this determined course may be, and difficult to the self indulged, it is no settlement.

What then is to be done?

To turn from the question of victuals to that of vices and their payment, we may remark that our best efforts to serve and obey God, under the instruction which the revelation of our Saviour Jesus Christ has given us, and with His Divine aid, can only eventuate in our attaining to a point of excellence which may deserve to be called dutiful, but which has nothing over and above in the way of merit to devote to any weak part in the past; for we are at best, that is, when our best resolves have been consistently lived up to, "unprofitable servants."

We have done what it was our duty to do, nothing more.

The debt incurred before this tardy rectitude emerged, remains.

§ 109.

No man likes to think of this. Device after device is embraced in the hope that it may, in a kind of half legitimate way at least, distract the thoughts from the forbidding problem.

In the presence of this question, fairly put, humanity at its best despairs; and from the first and earliest ages seems instinctively to have despaired.

It was to meet this hopeless and terrifying deficit that sacrifices smoked on Jewish altars, and, whether understood in the high spiritual sense of St. Paul, or less loftily, gave comfort to Jewish hearts; and did both with indisputable Divine warranty.

These sacrifices, understood as temporary substitutes, pointed to and stood for a power over and above man's, and which is able to achieve what to man is the blank impossible.

The sacrifice of Jesus Christ, consummated on the Cross of Calvary; the splendour of that life of exalted obedience; the life-blood of incarnate God poured out on this earth, voluntarily, as a friendly act to us in our desperate circumstances, to save us from the appalling, never ending consequences of our folly, this places within the reach of each one of us, the wealth wherewith to pay our large debts.

And if we awake all the drowsy faculties of our being into clear recognition of what has actually been done for us, we can pay all that so justly lies against us, to the very last cent.

But we must each give the matter our truest and most serious attention, and that at once.

If any man think that because this wealth is within his reach now in this world, and that as he cannot even by any license he might take, overdraw a sinner's share (the deposit is so incalculably large), he may therefore project his career of godless irregularity indefinitely into the future, he must ponder the grim fact that this giant mercy is suspended on the single thread of this life; and of all things that have an end, life is the very brittlest.

§ 110.

Those who draw the dallier's hope from the good fortune of the eleventh hour labourers in the Vineyard, will be wise to reflect that no one asked these men sooner than the last hour. When our Lord's "householder" of the parable demanded of them, "Why stand ye here all the day idle?" they say unto him with an honesty that goes undisputed, "Because no man hath hired us."

In our Christian land, with the church bells ringing their more than weekly peals, which are also true *appeals*, there remains scant refuge indeed for those dilatory ones who are at the same time, men and women in whom intelligence has not died.

§ 111.

It may take a large draft in our case.

The largeness of the draft may possibly dishearten us. But our whole soul, now actively alive, observes that we stand confronted with a double peril; on the one hand our voiceful past cries for a satisfying justice; on the other lies the supreme risk, which inaction involves, of doing high dishonor to the person and offices of Him who stood forth in our behalf; and that for the very purpose of wiping out just such accounts as ours. The weightier these are, the greater the honor done the Saviour, in believing that His Sacrifice does not even here fall short of full effectiveness.

"Naught can I bring, dear Lord, for all I owe;
Yet let my full heart what it can, bestow.
Like Mary's gift, let my devotion prove,
Forgiven greatly, how I greatly love."

This must be our attitude. This is for us the whole matter.

But it explains that otherwise insoluble problem—the forgiveness of sins; that doctrine so familiar to our lips, but in reality so violently opposed to all our experience, as to be a stumbling-block of really colossal dimensions to all of us.

Let us examine the difficulty.

§ 112.

A man does a crooked, an indefensible act, and in proportion to his spirituality or general morality, experiences inward discomfort and unrest. Conscience registers the deed and rings out the sentence due to the offence.

It cannot do otherwise. This is its native office. God made it a minister of fact, and it deals with facts; it adds them up and makes no error in the count.

Where not impaired by a course of violent handling, or dragged from its throne by deliberate abuse, this agent of God does its work faithfully and well. It tells the truth; for it knows nothing, it has no means of understanding or computing anything above or beneath its mathematical process of rigid registration.

In men not wholly depraved and besotted, then, this voice is alive, and makes the wrong act to live after it has transpired.

Everybody knows what a reputed authority on the subject so eloquently tells us about—

"All the deep and shuddering chill
Which follows fast the deeds of ill."

A man of honest purpose, in the main, who feels this disquiet within him on account of ac-

tions involuntarily present to his mind (like faces he never wanted to look upon, and hoped that he never should again behold), is tempted by the overpowering witness of this unimpeachable monitor within, to despair of doing any virtuous and religious duty henceforth, without running into the still greater infamy of hypocrisy. Conscience, the best thing that goes to make his individuality, certainly the most consistently upright, tells him that he is *not what he ought to be*; and this is far from encouraging to any self-respecting person: to many indeed if there is no rescue from it, it must be most formidable.

Conscience, which he has not the courage, the temerity, to face, is against him; and he knows, and silently acknowledges, that in all this antagonism and calling to account, conscience is right.

But here we take our stand, with our back to the wall, and fight for our life.

Conscience is not the vicegerent of the Almighty on earth.

Christianity is not a mere elaboration of conscience. If it were, it must be content to battle for first place merely amongst the philosophies.

The Saviour of mankind has not left the application of His solaces to conscience. Conscience

performs a different function, and His solaces are otherwise extended.

Our Lord Jesus Christ founded a Society against which "the gates of hell shall not prevail," for the express purpose of sheltering those who run away from the inexorable and insupportable clamor of an accusing conscience.

The Church of God does not exist, her edifices are not built nor her ministry divinely ordered, merely to echo those interior voices that madden and distract us.

§ 113.

God made conscience, it is true, and He does not deny His authorship, nor recall the commission given to His trusty agent.

But the achievement on earth, the voluntary sacrifice, the obedience to the death of the Son of God clothed in human nature, gives to Christ the right to say—and there is no power to gainsay—"Come unto Me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." "Weary and heavy laden," that is, with the awful tension of soul produced by our being a combination of inward condemnation (a condemnation to which we set our seal), a desire for release from our bonds, and a fear, lest on amendment of life or the appli-

cation to Christianity for relief, a worse thing, viz., hypocrisy, happen to us.

Misery indeed is this.

"Weary and heavy laden," are words which, when used by one who well knows the severe road we travel, mean this, and nothing else or less than this; the depression of a heart, not wholly depraved, under the ring of a condemning conscience.

But Jesus Christ the Saviour of mankind is the succorer of those for whom human help is no help; and Jesus Christ is above even conscience, which must take its place with all the rest of us as one of His creatures.

It is the Church's neighborly office (Luke x. 36), to proclaim the priceless privilege every man may now enjoy, of appeal to Christ Himself, even from what we rightly call our own inward better self, Conscience; and He who judged the woman taken in adultery, for whom Conscience prepared a stone-heap and willing, hostile arms, bids Conscience—our keeper—stand aside that He may deal directly with our case.

The Church gives us a supreme and prevailing Advocate and Mediator; and as we come, we learn the great historical, central fact of existence, that that past of ours, that peace-robbing course we pursued, and for which all our resourcefulness can

produce no answer, no payment, is not beyond a complete settlement, though far beyond the horizon that bounds human hope; and that in the presence of this peerless settlement, conscience itself stands wrapt in adoring approval.

§ 114.

This high settlement is made for us before the holy tribunal of God the Father, by the sacrifice of God the Son. This is what is meant by "the forgiveness of sins" and "the blood shed for the remission of sins."

Unsystematic habits of thinking, or, more accurately, the palsy that seems to overtake all our reflective faculties when the subject before us is our eternal (not instead of, but) in addition to our present welfare, is responsible for the exaggerated dimensions of the stumbling-block which this doctrine has become to most of us.

The Atonement which Christ our Saviour has made for us is a solid foundation, on which our feet can solidly and sensibly rest. And yet there is, verily, no airy magic about this method of wiping out our past.

Payment has been made in full for every item in that dread account, which we have long known as a morbid sensation clinging to us—a chronic, dull ache—which has been a very potent deterrent

SOME FEATURES OF THE FAITH.

from better things, and from a nobler and more Christ-like life.

We could not see our way through the mists of this malarial district; but the considerations which we have just passed in review, wondrously dissipate the darkness, and centre all our soul on the amazing interest we have secured with God, by Christ our Advocate, who found us out in our pathless morass, and gives to our feet a pathway again to our Father's gates.

§ 115.

In the days of the apostles, and during the age immediately succeeding, no question seems to have been raised as to *how* Christ's dying for us procured the remission of our sins.

Everybody was familiar with the religious idea of sacrifice, the heathen no less than the Jew; and the central truth of the Christian creed—the voluntary offering of Himself for the sins of the world—struck a deeply responsive chord in the breasts of those early Christians, but one which they were content to enjoy without analyzing.

It was not by their skill as dialecticians that the apostles forced the attention and conviction of the world: not at all by the faultless method of presentation that their large propositions won their way; it was rather by the stamp of power and

reality that was upon the men, and which pointed to heaps of evidence of their Divine mission, staggering to the senses of man, that the apostles disarmed criticism, and warmed indifference into discipleship.

Then, for two centuries, followed a reverent and unquestioning satisfaction with the faith of the apostles, held in the exact language used by the apostles. But the intellect of the Church did at length begin, as it could not fail to do, to pay its homage to the faith so devoutly received and held by so many generations of Christians.

"At first Christianity's work was in the main with the heart, and when that was filled, it next asserted its right over the intellect.

"And perhaps it is not difficult to see a fitness in that disposition of events, which committed the teaching of the apostles to minds essentially receptive and conservative, that it might be wrought into the life of man before it became the subject of subtle analysis."*

§ 116.

With Origen in the East, and Irenæus in the West, at the beginning of the third century, arose a manifest desire to find some answer for the queries that sprang up in men's minds in connec-

* Westcott, *Canon of the New Testament*, page 335.

tion with the Church's faith in the death of Christ, and the mighty benefits accruing to us from that Sacrifice, made for us and for our salvation.

What a ransom was, was sufficiently understood; and that Christ paid the ransom for us by voluntarily giving up His own body and life to death, was firmly believed. But the absorbing question of questions now became this: To whom did the Redeemer pay over His priceless ransom?

There seems to have been no great delay between the asking and the answering of this, to us, very pertinent question.

The fathers solved it to the satisfaction of their own, and apparently of every succeeding generation for a thousand years.

But when we of to-day consider that solution, we are forced to recognize the obtrusive fact that each age must do its own thinking, and that the monopoly is given to no one particular age in human history.

The plain truth is, that the fathers' solution of this important matter does not satisfy us.

In fact it is so far from satisfying us, that we set it aside, not only because it is inadequate and impossible, but because it is shocking.

It is said of Luther, that having visited the city of Rome, and been eye-witness to the immorality

and openly un-Christian lives of ecclesiastics there, both high and low, he went away more convinced than ever before, of the truth and Divine origin of Christianity. The irresistible reason for this access of belief on Luther's part, was, he is said to have affirmed, that no religion less than Divine could survive so much hostility to its existence from its very defenders.

The Lutheran (and if it be not Luther's, and if Luther did not actually see what he is said to have seen, I shall regret the use of the story even as an illustration), reflection is timely when we remember that the fathers taught the world that the life of the Saviour Jesus Christ, was paid as *a ransom to the Devil*.*

Here and there through the world and the centuries, we find a voice raised against this teaching; but the main current of Christian thought was, for a millennium, in tranquil agreement with this startling explanation of the great difficulty of the remission of sins, and the grounds upon which the remission rationally rests.

§ 117.

Anselm, Archbishop of Canterbury, at the beginning of the twelfth century, wrote a treatise

* "It is hard to say whether Holy Scripture is more injured by those who assail it or by those who defend it" (Bishop Westcott, *The Bible in the Church*, Preface.

with the intention of stemming this tide, and to a great extent succeeded; but that the popular notion may be justly described as a tide, and in full flow so late as Anselm's time, is shown by the significant tact he was obliged to use in presenting his views, of which we shall see something in a moment.

Gregory of Nyssa, brother of St. Basil, and who was called by the Emperor Theodosius "the common pillar of the Church," and who was present at the council of Constantinople in A. D. 381; wrote and published an elaboration of the common theory of the way in which the Saviour's death atoned for the sins of the world.

His main position was that the whole matter of Christ's redemption of us was effected by a trick. The Almighty was forced to have recourse to a ruse in order to do us this great good.

Gregory of Nyssa says that by that awful act in the garden of Eden, by which the fountain head of our humanity entered the domain of sin, and dragged us all with him, he drew us under the sovereignty of the devil.

The Saviour volunteers to be our ransom, and to give Himself up to the ruler of the power of darkness, if only he will let us all go free.

Satan, in whose dread kingdom we were all

slaves, considers the proposal with a certain degree of favor; and after much weighing of the advantages and the possible losses, finally decides to accept the great exchange.

The shackles are therefore removed, and humanity is liberated. But the devil soon finds that he has reason to repent of his bargain; for as events proceed, he is compelled to recognize the fact that even his supreme shrewdness has been overreached.

He is unable to retain in his custody the wondrous Personality whom he has accepted as the ransom for our race. Christ, by the exercise of His omnipotence, bursts through His prison, and the spoiler is despoiled of his Prey, not recognizing that under the humble guise of the Ransomer's humanity, the awful nature of God was concealed.

Gregory then sums up his argument by seriously maintaining that deception was the devil's part in the matter of Adam and Eve, warranted the discomfiture of the devil by the same means, *at the hands of God.*

§ 118.

One hundred years later lived St. Augustine, the oracle of thirteen centuries—apologist, interpreter of Scripture, theologian.

This wonderful theory of Gregory of Nyssa was well known to Augustine, and we find that he evinced no great hostility to it.

St. Augustine expounded the matter by saying that we were held in the power of the devil; that the devil, though finding nothing worthy of death in Christ, yet nevertheless slew Him, *and therefore it is certainly just* that we whom he held as debtors should be dismissed free by believing in Him whom the devil slew without any debt.

So are we justified in the blood of Christ.

§ 119.

This, or this slightly varied in the details, is the language and the theology of the Church's foremost scholars, with hardly an audible discord, not only until the time of Anselm, but until the teaching of Anselm was digested by the masses; and this we must set as not less than a hundred years after Anselm. For owing to the absence of modern facilities for disseminating knowledge, this must have been a process of the slowest possible character: for Anselm's was not an age in which the heads of families spent their evenings in the perusal of instructive literature of any kind, sacred or secular.

Dr. Dale in his lectures on the Atonement has a passage from the writings of St. Bernard of

Clairvaux (who was an infant two years old when Anselm was made Archbishop of Canterbury), in which St. Bernard still maintains the traditional view in violent opposition to Abelard; because Abelard, while acknowledging that all the teachers of the Church since the apostles' time agreed in the opinion that the death of Christ had redeemed us from the power of the devil, yet had the courage to stand aloof and to hold a different opinion.

The passage is as follows: "The Lord said, I will save thee and deliver thee. Fear not. Thou askest from what power. Thou art not willing that the devil should have, or should have had power over man—nor I, I confess; but neither thy will nor mine can hinder it.

"If thou wilt not confess, nor say it, those who have been redeemed by the Lord, those whom He has redeemed from the hand of the enemy, know it and say it.

"Thou wouldst not deny it if thou wert not still in the enemy's hand; thou canst not render thanks with the redeemed, thou who art not redeemed."

But the condition in which this subject has been left by the early fathers and their successors through the ages, only proves conclusively that it

was never a burning question to any general extent; and here it is only proper to remark, that the reasons why Christ died, and how our sins are forgiven by His death, are not necessary to our belief in and our enjoying the entire benefits of His "full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world."

§ 120.

To show the cautious way in which Anselm in his work on this subject, "*Cur Deus Homo*," proceeds so as not to shock popular and deep-rooted prejudices, I quote his opening sentences, in which he mentions his adoption of the Catechetical method as the one most suited to his purpose—a choice which a modern writer on the subject thinks skilful as relieving the Archbishop from urging, in his own name, the objections which appeared to him to be fatal to the traditional theory, that Christ died to snatch us from the grip of Satan.

"Often," says St. Anselm, "both by word of mouth, and by letter, have I been eagerly asked to write down the explanatory arguments with which I am accustomed to answer those who ask about various points of our faith, for they say that they enjoy them, and think them conclusive. . . . The unbelieving often question (deriding Christian simplicity as infatuated), and the faithful

wonder in their own hearts, for what reason, and by what necessity God was made man, and by His death, as we believe and confess, gave His life to the world, since He might have done this by another person, whether angelic or human; or by His sole will.

"On this point not the learned only, but also many unlearned persons inquire much, and ask the reason of it.

"Therefore since many desire this subject to be treated, and since the elucidation, though very difficult to carry out, is intelligible to all when completed, and attractive on account of its usefulness and the beauty of its reasoning; I will try (although what should be enough has been said by the holy fathers on the subject) to show forth to those who are seeking, that which God may deign to disclose to me.

"And since question and answer is an easy way of explaining things, I shall make one of my petitioners my interlocutor—Boso shall ask and Anselm shall answer as follows."

Then follow twenty-five chapters of the first book and all the chapters but three, of the concluding portion of the work, before the following courageous and enlightened view is given to the world:

"I think I have in some measure already an-

swered your question, although a better than myself could do so more fully, and the reason and consequence of this mystery are greater and more numerous than my intellect or that of mortal man is able to grasp.

"Still it is plain that God in no wise needed to do that which we have mentioned; immutable verity, however, so required.

"But granting that what that man did, God is said to have done (on account of the unity of person), yet God needed not to have come down from heaven to conquer the devil, nor to act against him to set man free as a maker of justice; but God required man to vanquish the devil, in order that he who had offended God by sin, by righteousness might make reparation.

"Inasmuch as to the devil God owed nought save punishment: nor did man, save conquest, that having been vanquished by the devil, he might vanquish him in turn; but whatsoever was required of man, he owed to God, not to the devil."

§ 121.

But the old, and, until Anselm's time, generally received theory of Christ's paying His ransom to the devil, died hard; if we can be sure that it has at last been utterly and everywhere crushed out.

And now the way is clear for us to deal with the great subject as it meets ourselves in this advanced age of the life of the Church of God.

§ 122.

We have seen that in Adam's fall, more than an individual catastrophe was brought about.

Adam's disobedience in the garden of Eden produced evils so wide and far-reaching, that they are utterly unparalleled in the whole history of sin. The way in which this Eden-error reaches even to us of to-day, and affects the latest child born into the world as thoroughly as it did the immediate offspring of Adam, is, as has been shown, entirely unaccountable until we understand the extraordinary relationship which our first parent bears to the race, in comparison with any of his progeny—our ordinary ancestors.

Ancestry is the stream, at whatever point in its course we take it, looking backwards.

Adam was the fountain-head of the still waters before they moved an inch on their course.

If this fountain-head be kept pure, all is safe from at least overwhelming disaster.

Poison this momentous spring, and life is threatened along every bank from the source to the sea; or in other words, from creation to eternity.

The saying, "A stream cannot rise higher than

its source," holds good, too, when we are thinking of humanity.

We may here change the figure from a stream to a tree. If therefore this root or seed be poisonous as that of the deadly Upas-tree, the latest and greenest shoot of the bulky growth must exhibit the same poisonous nature as that from which it sprang. Adam's sin therefore, producing distortion of nature in him, produces a like distortion of nature in me; and my mind sees the connection between us clearly.

Now if the stream of humanity cannot rise higher than its sinful source, purification must come from a quarter without and above it.

The Scriptures tell us that when this parent root of our race took the poison into his life, God, while looking upon the sin, mercifully promised what humanity may reverently term the impossible—"the seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head" (Gen. iii. 15). No explanation of the mystery was vouchsafed, but hope lived. From that moment, therefore, there were suspended before the consciousness of our race, three tremendous moulding facts; namely, mankind's awful plight: the impossibility of self righting; and the certainty, notwithstanding, of rescue; and, as we have seen, the whole system of Jewish sacrifices was de-

signed by God to keep these three great facts clear and unobscured in the minds of men, like three towering mountain-peaks, ever present on the horizon of human thought—self effected degradation, helplessness, and ultimate rescue. Let us now at length turn our eyes to the last of these, the rescue.

§ 123.

If the mind found difficulty in agreeing to the justice of our being affected by, and punished for, a sin committed thousands of years before we were born: and yet if on proper understanding of the extraordinary circumstances attending that distant sin, every charge of injustice has been withdrawn, shall we not hope that a similar change of front may be brought about by a like reverent and close study of the matter, in the judgment of those who see injustice in God's acceptance of the Sacrifice of the Cross for the sins of the world? Or, in other words of harsher sound, God's pleasure in the sacrifice of the innocent for and instead of the guilty?

There is no doubt that this has been a rallying point for all the hostile critics of Christianity.* They take secure shelter behind their impregnable position, that the tribunal which accepts the death of an innocent man in the place of that of the

* Note H.

culprit, is unworthy of respect; and we may hasten to concede that so long as they confine themselves to human law courts, no right reasoning can drive them from their entrenchment.

But these critics cannot continue to ignore the facts that they are dealing with a subject which is larger than their models; and that in charging God with injustice in the matter of the Atonement, they may have run on the same rocks here, that stranded them when declaiming against the monstrosity of imagining that we are in any way concerned with, or affected by, the wrong-doing of another person, away back in the dawn of time.

In the case of Christ's Atonement, as in that of Adam's sin, such reasoners have altogether omitted from their consideration of the subject (that which we have already risked the charge of tiresome repetition in order to do full justice to), the extraordinary and altogether unparalleled relationship borne, both by our Lord and Adam, to the human race.

Neither is an ordinary great figure in history.

Neither is, like every other mortal whether distinguished or obscure, a mere *link in the chain* of humanity.

And here is the *crux*; for the profound anomaly which meets us in both cases, accounts for the

facts, equally immutable, that Adam sinned and I suffer; "Christ died and I live." "Therefore as by the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation, even so by the righteousness of one, the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life. For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous."

§ 124.

The voice of Fatherhood in God, uttered in Eden, and promising victory to the seed of the woman, meant that a *second Adam* should come to earth; that He should take the first Adam's chances, now lessened and all clogged by sin; and should vindicate the honor of the Almighty, and the justness of His requirements of man, by showing that man's highest good and ripest wisdom lay in following, even through the jaws of a violent death, the will of his Maker.

The voice of Fatherhood in God, therefore, meant *sacrifice*—the voluntary sacrifice of the Son of God—the bruising of the body under the full weight of Adam's sin; while the soul remained serene in adoring loyalty to the Father's will; and this Second Adam, Root or Fountain-Head of the race, should re-beget the race in His own Divine

image, thus restoring to man all that he had lost by the fall.

§ 125.

And now we see the beauty of holiness, the noble righteousness of God, referred to by the prophet Isaiah:

"He shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: He hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see Him, there is no beauty that we should desire Him. He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief:

"And we hid as it were our faces from Him; He was despised, and we esteemed Him not.

"Surely He hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem Him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed.

"All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned everyone to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all.

"He was oppressed, and He was afflicted, yet He opened not His mouth: He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her

shearers is dumb, so He openeth not His mouth.

"He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare His generation? for He was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was He stricken.

"And He made His grave with the wicked, and with the rich in His death; because He had done no violence, neither was any deceit in His mouth. Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise Him; He hath put Him to grief; when thou shalt make His soul an offering for sin, He shall see His seed, He shall prolong His days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in His hand. He shall see of the travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied:

"By His knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for He shall bear their iniquities.

"Therefore will I divide Him a portion with the great, and He shall divide the spoil with the strong; because He hath poured out His soul unto death; and He was numbered with the transgressors; and He bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors."

§ 126.

Looking down from heaven upon our hopeless plight, God, the Son says, "Lo I come, to do Thy will, O God;" and before His vision, doubtless, the sufferings of soul and body, recorded in the gospels

as incident to the doing of that will under the new circumstances which man's sin had introduced, were all present: the rejection, the thanklessness, Gethsemane, the hiding of the Father's face, and the welcome, violent finish.

This work of reconciliation, honoring to God and friendly to man, how great and awful was the sacrifice it demanded!

God's will, the Creator's will, is the creature's best good.

The first Adam thought, or acted as if he thought, otherwise. The Second Adam pays the glorious homage to the Almighty of choosing His will as the *only possible good*, no matter how roughly clothed it might be.

If we may say that the prospect of death or dishonor offers no real choice to the true soldier; we may say that, to Christ, there was no choice, no choosing, because there was absolutely no alternative for Him. God's will stood for Him peerless and alone.

§ 127.

The sacrifice of Christ to the righteousness of God is this voluntary act of worship to God, and of rescue to mankind. "To obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams"

(I Sam. xv. 22). "He created the world with power but restored it by obedience," says Hooker.

It shows man the direction and path wherein his true happiness lies, and exhibits, and offers to God the honor due unto His name, of a high, even a selfish obedience to His will; an obedience, that is, which has as much good for the creature enfolded within it, as it has honor for the Creator.

§ 128.

It was part of Adam's awful legacy to the race, that wrong ideas of the promised Messiah should entrench themselves in the hearts and minds of men, and that as the fulness of time approached for the fulfilment of the great Eden-promise, men should mature themselves in their bias for the rejection of Him for whom they waited.

Looking out upon the mission He generously undertakes, the Second Adam sees how far His path of pure obedience to God the Father must lead Him from the course of those who uphold the standard of God on earth; and sees also the arraignment and condemnation before public opinion, which this divergence must bring to those standard-bearers, *i.e.*, the rulers of God's Church on earth; and seeing this, the Saviour sees what perhaps is not wholly beyond merely human vision

—that violence and death lie straight before Him in His chosen path.*

It is to do the will of the Father, and to do it in the face of all this, that He comes.

§ 129.

We cannot think that the bodily bruising of the Lord (awful as that most truly was, and inevitable), was anything more than the welcome ending of the more poignant agony of the Redeemer which reached its highest in the hiding of the Father's face.

The death on the cross is the record, the announcement to Heaven and earth, and to hell, of the final triumphing obedience of the Second Adam; the full complete victory of Him who came to do what Adam failed to do, and to undo what Adam did.

When the Redeemer cried, 'It is finished', as He hung upon the cross, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom; because thenceforward the centre service of Sacrifice pertaining to the old dispensation was abolished. That perfect, that satisfying Sacrifice was now offered up as an odor of a sweet smell well pleasing to God. The odor of this offering ascended from the sacred heart of humanity; and when that heart

* Note 1.

broke to live again forevermore, this world and the prince of this world were overcome.”*

The finality of this utter obedience is enshrined for our unspiritual apprehension in the last act upon the cross—the death. “He humbled Himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.” This was the limit, and the Saviour duly reached it. The mind rightly enough takes the crowning pinnacle of this matchless Sacrifice, and rivets its adoring gaze upon that point.

§ 130.

The gibe recorded in the gospels, and which seems at first sight to have a disturbing element of fitness in it, “If Thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross,” is discovered to be the weakest of cavils, when we reflect that to come down from the cross at the bidding of any voice that is not God’s would be to throw down His commission, to abjure the plan perfected in Heaven and voluntarily undertaken for the salvation of man, and to choose the meanest of opposites before and instead of the will of God the Father.

The gibe is, besides, seen to be dishonest—the echo of a condition of soul absolutely hostile to truth—when we remember that it only demands

* Martensen.

a new miracle; and when the prospect that an additional miracle, such as this now required, would alone do what scores of such or greater Divine manifestations had failed to do, is wildly irrational. No pretence, even, of sincerity is attempted. Triumphant hatred was the parent of it; and like the barking of dogs at an advancing army, no halt is called to deal with the matter.

§ 131.

The advocate for humanity in this great controversy between Creator and creature might urge the plea that for Adam in his temptation, God's conditions were too severe, were impossible; that the winds and waves were too strong for his frail bark, and so he inevitably made shipwreck. But the awful wrestling with danger and difficulty in the garden of Gethsemane, the dark waters that overflowed and engulfed the human soul of the Redeemer, producing a sweat of blood from His sacred body, failed to register a hair's breadth deflection from the inviolable consciousness of the Second Adam, that God's will is always best.

The Second Adam proved that it was possible as it was profitable in every light, to be loyal to the Father's will. "O My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as Thou wilt."

A "Second Adam" veritably "to the fight and to the rescue came;" and so Heaven is refreshed by the sight of human flesh restored to the image in which it was created—the image of God.

§ 132.

Our Lord's taking three of His chosen ones with Him into the Garden of Gethsemane, when His final encounter with all the forces arrayed against "the Saviour" was to take place, is suggestive of more than the commonplace desire for the companionship of these apostles, or of the mere force of habit, from having had these disciples with Him on at least two other exceptionally important occasions.

These were the best that earth could produce. Amongst the noblest material that the sons of men offered for pillarhood in that imperishable Society which Omnipotence framed for the diffusion of the Saviour's achieved benefit to mankind, these were the foremost and the best.

These, then, were not unfitted to represent the most finished qualification which humanity could boast, for entrance on that great struggle which was about to take place for man's rescue.

But the struggle was engaged in without them: their largest measure was taken when the Saviour left them at a distance behind Him. But even this

estimate—the status of spectators in their own contest, “Tarry ye here and watch,”—was of too generous proportions; for the event proved that they were not even, as they might have been, conscious of what was going on.

The distance therefore between humanity’s “possible” and the salvation of man, is symbolized not only by the space which lay between the respective positions of our Saviour and His chosen followers, at the moment when the utter and eternal overthrow of the powers of darkness was effected; but by the spiritual condition, as compared with Christ, of these apostles at this momentous time. He was in agony (St. Luke xxii. 44), for the crisis evoked it. They were asleep, *for their eyes were heavy*. A pitiful showing, surely, and thrice repeated without any betterment. Such as it was, it was humanity’s best.

When our Lord and Redeemer took with Him into the garden Peter and James and John, are we not permitted to think that He designed to unfold to us a parable, and the last and greatest of all His parables? Shall gratitude in us sell its birth-right,—perception—for a mass of pottage, *i.e.*, sleep?

§ 133.

The righteousness, because the possibility, of God’s conditions for man in Adam, is vindicated.

Obedience in the Saviour consumed obstructions, as fire does fuel. "Thy will be done!" is the last triumphant echo of the conflict, and opens *the way*.

Infinite succor, noble and ennobling, which man has still if he will use them; faculties to perceive and understand, and in some measure to respond to, teaches him where and how he now stands before his Maker. His attitude can never be vain-glorious, for his dignity is *borrowed*. Honest humility and gratitude must be the salient features of his daily life and religion.

§ 134.

A new fountain-head of humanity has now been established from which shall issue, as at first, sons and daughters born in the image of God. "As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive."

The ineffable interest in us that prompted this mighty friendship and sacrifice for us, makes sure that the benefits of the victory shall reach us.

An institution framed and compacted by the same Divine Lord that redeemed us, and whose object it is to carry out the full plan of this rescue and restoration, is set up on earth.

This institution is the womb of the new birth, the bride of Christ, "the Church of the living God and the pillar and ground of the truth."

Nobody can find reasoning fault that the benefits should accrue to us from the sacrifice and achievement of the Second Adam, when the misery and sinfulness, consequent upon the course of the first Adam, so terribly affect us.

If the transmission of Adam's sin is as right as it is actual, the transmission of the benefits of Christ's passion is as real as it is right.

By generation we become partakers and sharers of Adam's state: Christ's is ours by regeneration.

And so the Atonement, the at-one-ment, is effected. God and man are at one again. Reconciliation has been brought about and the ransom paid, in the high sense which we have seen.

The Lamb of God taketh away the sins of the world. God's true forgiveness reaches us, but there is holy method in the manner which demands our attention.

The method is calculated to show to the most unthinking, at once the enormity of the charge that lay against us (by the awful cost of the righting), and the nature of Him with whom we have to do.

§ 135.

It now remains for us to do what we can in word and deed; of these our word is well set forth in the Communion hymn:

"Look, Father, look on His anointed face,
And only look on us as found in Him :
Look not on our misusings of Thy grace,
Our prayer so languid, and our faith so dim ;
For lo, between our sins and their reward,
We set the passion of Thy Son our Lord."

Our deed is to do what we can, and all we can. Knowing from what and how we have been delivered, and knowing, too, the nurture due to the new life within us, we are to seek and to fully apply *the means of grace* which He has left us in His Church, the two natures—the old Adam and the new Christ-life—struggling the while against each other; our failures making us, like stumbling children, hold more firmly to the protecting hand that guides us.

It is much to know, now that the road has been truly pointed out, and a guide supplied us, that when we have made the best of our way, and reached our journey's end, we shall not find the gates of our Father's house any longer barred and guarded against us, and a flaming sword wielded to drive us off the premises.

Thus the Atonement may be summed up before our minds, and expressed in one sentence—God the Son, our Judge to be, *endured the penalty of our sins, instead of inflicting it.*

NOTE:—In a rural mission a couple of hours distant from Ottawa, the clergyman in charge wa-

invited by one belonging to the household to go and see a man who had, during his life, made very little use of the services of clergymen, as he set exceedingly little value upon them. He now bore the weight of ninety years; but when interested, displayed an energy of mind that was not given to confusing things, or arguing at all irrationally from his standpoint.

He was a remarkable man, as the clergyman soon found out. His long contemptuous hostility to the Church and her ministry, and his well-known refusal to be put into a passion by having to listen, as he described it, to their defence of the indefensible, made this visit of the clergyman to him, if not an intrusion, at least a very delicate matter. This aged man had in his younger days been a sailor on a British man-of-war which was engaged in the battle of Navarino. This subject offered a facile introduction: and after an unfeigned interest was shown in his lucid account of the great sea fight, the subject of the Christian's fight, and our hopes of success through the merits of Christ, were referred to.

At once the aged man seemed to become young, alert, combative. He charged injustice against God for making man the imperfect being he is. Why not make right to start with? If the

machine were properly constructed, the work done by it would be all right. But how can we look for the best results from the worst and most ill-made instrument?

He then scathingly illustrated the predicament of the race, by asking if he, or any man, should deserve the affection of his children or the approval of his neighbors, if, having deliberately made a treacherous pit in front of his door, he were to punish his children for falling into it?

The aged objector was courteously reminded that the imagery he employed was misleading. God was, without controversy, not making machines when He created man.

He was making a being in God's own image, endowed with that wondrous gift—free will—which sets him as far from the condition of a machine as the east is from the west. To make him an automaton which could not choose but do what it was constructed to do, would be to create a machine: and such, if deemed worth an existence, ought perhaps to be as faultless as possible of its kind.

But to imagine that the Ruler of the universe could mistake the mechanical noise of such a thing for praise, or its work for worship or sonship, is a thing too monstrously unworthy for any reverent

or sound mind to entertain for a moment. The man visited weighed all this, and seemed to have no violent objection to the explanation of his difficulty.

He then addressed himself to the task of showing that our presentation of the work of Christ in the salvation of mankind is dishonoring to God, who might otherwise be loved and served.

"God," he said, "is right in declaring us to be sinners, even far beyond the inevitable, and therefore right in setting down the measure of punishment due to our wrong-doing; but the clergy charge God with a more heinous crime than any which men have committed, when they teach that He punished, and was placated by punishing, an innocent man—the one only innocent man—for and instead of the guilty multitude. It is outrageous, shocking, fiendish: I cannot bring myself to pray to this God of yours, nor have anything to do with either Him or you, so long as you demand that I shall believe this."

The clergyman, affected by the intense earnestness of this strong thinker, and the consciousness that a long life had been boldly regulated in too perfect a consistency with this logic; and feeling, also, the solemn responsibility of his own position, offered up a rapid petition for the aid of the Holy

Spirit, that truth, and the majesty of God, might not suffer at his hands; and that he, as a witness to the truth, might prove more than a "well without water" to this apparently honest reasoner.

The old man was informed that the great mistake made by all those who urged this specious condemnation of the punishment of the innocent, instead of the guilty, was that they saw in Jesus Christ *only a man*: and so long as we see in Him no more than this, there is no escape for us from impalement on the spear-points of all wholesome sense and feeling. But the Church of God calls such a doctrine of the Incarnator's nature, heresy; and has long ago set her darkest stigma upon it. She does not teach that Christ is but the sublimest specimen of man. Indeed she considers this the one *impossible* account of Him; for He is either God, or He is an impostor. He claims to be God, and His claim must be sustained; or every worthy feature falls from Him. There is no middle character possible. What we are taught by the Church, and what we believe, is that Jesus Christ is "God of God, Light of light, very God of very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father, by whom all things were made: Who for us men and for our salvation came down from Heaven, and was incarnate by the Holy

Ghost of the Virgin Mary, and was made man";—and that this mighty Personage, thus perfect God and perfect Man, was crucified also for us.

The following illustration was then offered: "Suppose you, who are the head of a family, have found to your horror that your children have offended you in the tenderest part of your honor and fatherhood. They have wilfully violated a known principle, vital to your continuance together, not only in one house, but in the relationship of father and children. Their rebellion makes it absolutely necessary for you to act judicially, and either punish them condignly on the spot, or banish them forever from your sight; as there must be but one master in your house. You summon the offenders. They stand there before you in a semi-circle. You lay bare to them the enormity of their sin, and show the punishment justly due to it, and by every consideration, a punishment which it is obligatory upon you to administer. You show them also, dispassionately, that nothing actuates you but loyalty to right and their highest good, and that, father and all as you are to them, the swift punishment must descend.

"You notice the sullen assent they are forced to give to what you say—an assent which may, for the moment, disarm their opposition, but which

gives the poorest hopes of the full return of their filial love and duty to you.

"Just then the father's heart in your breast inspires you with a design which shall bring about not only their complete acknowledgment of their dire offence against the holiest law written in our nature, but which shall give you back the hearts of your children.

"You do a wondrous thing. The punishment falls, indeed, but not on them. You bare your own arm before them, and upon its smooth, unoffending surface you receive the cruel bruising and branding which should have fallen upon each of them.*

"Is there injustice in all this? Is it monstrous, and shocking, and fiendish, in you to take this course in order to restore to you and to their better selves, your children?

"Is this punishment of the innocent for and instead of the guilty reprehensible? In short, is it not, on the contrary, as full of wisdom as it is of the loftiest sacrifice; since it secures all that the condign punishment of each could secure—the safeguarding of what is due to a father—and also that which punishment could not achieve, namely,

* This punishment is all enwrapt in the obedience of the Second Adam which triumphed finally in the Crucifixion. The whole, foreseen by God the Son, is justly termed a sacrifice.

the throbbing, self-condemning love of that father, in the bosom of each one of those children?"

The aged man's face now wore a softened look, and his eyes suffused as he replied to the missionary: "There is no injustice in that, no injustice in that."

§ 136.

"It is not," says a distinguished layman lately deceased, "by any innovation, so to speak, in His scheme of government, that the Almighty brings about this great and glorious result. What is here enacted on a gigantic scale in the kingdom of grace, only repeats a phenomenon with which we are perfectly familiar in the natural and social order of the world, where the good, at the expense of pain endured by them procure benefits for the unworthy. It may indeed be said and with truth, that the good men of whom we speak, are but partially good, whereas the Lord Christ is absolutely good. True: yet the analogy is just, and it holds, even if we state no more than that the better suffer* for the worse" (Gladstone).

§ 137.

The restoration to Eden and to sonship in God which the great achievement of Christ effects, is

* Note J.

brought home to us, as the work of our undoing was, by an act of eating.

Forty centuries of teaching through the symbolism of sacrificial feasts, have prepared the race for partaking of "the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world," and for understanding the import of the words, "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, ye have no life in you."

Not only the Church, but even the world at its worst, if we interpret aright its discontent with its decked out sin, sighs with relief at the exchange of the forbidden fruit for the Supper of the Lord.

§ 138.

As "all the ills that flesh is heir to," are to be traced to the act of eating in the garden of Eden, so our feasting on the Body and Blood of Christ, means for us freedom from all this evil, both in the present world and in that to which we are hurrying.

The achievement of Christ is not meant to stand alone as a historic fact. It is meant to reach us. It was to be no mere demonstration of spiritual prowess on the part of the Redeemer. It was preëminently a *rescue*; and to make it this, it must reach its object—the human soul.

To eat and drink, is within the reach and capa-

bility of each of us; the rest, for which this holy Mystery stands, is beyond us. To eat, and to know why, on what authority, and with what hope, we eat; and knowing, to be thankful—this is all our humble part. For in the Sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christ, we come *to receive a gift*; and not to barter, nor offer any exchange.

It is not a little to know this. It shows and keeps us mindful of just where we stand. Our highest possible service to God and ourselves in this great matter, is to put ourselves in an attitude for receiving this gracious and timely boon; to come to the distributing point—the altar-rails. This is the kernel-truth.

The glory, as the merit of it (the merit that is found at the altar-rails where God and man now meet), is all God's: ours the honest, thrilling acknowledgment of this fact. "Lo, between our sins and their reward, we set the passion of Thy Son our Lord."

§ 139.

And here we may take note of the latent Judaism that inheres in us all, and at the very moment that we most need this Divine mercy, religiously keeps us from it.

We abstain from the Holy Communion *because we are not good enough to partake of it.*

We have learned so well that feeling—the inner testimony and conviction of union with God—is the pith of Christianity, that we recoil in dismay when we look within ourselves for any warranty, any uplifting of our hearts in a confident way, to eat and drink of that holy food.

Within the court of conscience—that stern judge—and with memory in the box testifying against us, we wear no very buoyant air. We rather cling to the shadow of merit there may be in our refraining from presuming thus far beyond our actual deserts. To go forward and receive the sacred Elements in our present condition, we feel would strain all our native sense of fitness, and lay us open to the weighty arraignment of desecration; and so, failing all countenance from within ourselves (since we cannot help ourselves) we permit conscience to make out a clear case against us, and we anticipate the echo of the sentence to be pronounced upon us, as guilty on all the counts of the indictment—a judgment to which we are forced to set our seal.

And this conviction carries with it, as a scarcely questioned consequence, the certainty of our unqualifiedness, our interior unfitness for the reception of the Holy Communion.

Now, no one will for a moment deny that there

is a great deal of naturalness, and wholesomeness of sentiment about this way of looking at ourselves, when brought face to face with a celebration of the Holy Eucharist. To be wanting in this proper sense of our vileness in the presence of the All Holy, would argue a strange and impious effrontery.

The inhibitory power manifested by one who thus refrains from proceeding to the reception of the Blessed Sacrament, from a feeling that to do so would be shocking to his sense of the reverence due to that ordinance, shows such a person to be possessed of moral perceptions of a highly creditable character, whatever question may be raised as to the accuracy of his grasp of the teaching of Christ in the matter.

The contrast which he presents to the inert Christian, who goes forward to participate only because it would demand too much energy to defend the opposite course, which all the while may be felt to be the right one, is the not unworthy contrast of a strong against a feeble mind.

While beside the non-participant from any cause, the robber-pietist who aspires to the praises of sanctity for their sweetness, and for the things desirable to which he may make them instrumental, is a shocking spectacle, of which let us

hope the Church of God in our country has few instances.

And yet notwithstanding all this, we must pause to consider whether we are right in arriving at our conclusions (if not in regard to our unworthiness, at least as concerns our meeting the apostolical *requirements* of would-be communicants), arrived at in such faithful accord with what are, after all, only worldly ideals. For is not this the way the matter would be weighed, *pro* and *con*, for us in any court of justice in the land? And as we have seen, in discussing the subject of Repentance, that there is open for sinful man a court of appeal even from the noblest canons of justice which this world knows, ay, even from the deliverances of conscience itself, may we not entertain the suspicion, that in the presence of the Holy Communion it is possible that we are in so altogether peerless a situation—a situation wherein we contemplate a mighty fact which shatters into fragments all rules of regular procedure, and all reasoning adequate to ordinary courses of events—that it may be quite as improper for us to recede as to advance?

§ 140.

If our pulpits were transformed from the chancel to the porch, and congregations of Christ-

ian worshippers addressed as they come out of our churches, the priest-preacher demanding from each intelligent non-partaker of the Holy Communion his reasons for this silent affront to his Creator and Redeemer (in whom but a few moments before he publicly confessed his belief), it might throw the burden of proof on the proper side.

In the present instructed condition of society in Christian lands, the Church ought perhaps, as much as she can, to place the responsibility where God will undoubtedly place it, namely, upon the heads of those who thus refuse His Salvation.

To argue that one is not good enough—the commonest of all excuses and defences, and one in which we have noticed some elements of merit—what exactly does it mean?

The first thing we may say about it, is that to no one interrogated at the church door as to his abstaining from this highest privilege of a Christian, and who adopts this as his reply, does this bar present itself as a permanent, irremediable thing, a thing which renders him one of a hopeless, changeless caste amongst those who profess Christianity.

In almost every case we may, on the contrary, say that this present unworthiness speaks rather emphatically of periods, both in the past and in

the future, of (to himself) satisfactory "worthiness."

If we ask how these periods in the past were attained to, we may safely expect to be informed that however they were labored up, they were experienced and registered in "feeling."

As to the future periods, whose advent it has made the present unsatisfactory state so much more rational and easy to bear than it otherwise would be; how, we may ask, is the proper warmth of feeling which it must possess to be secured by any agency possessing more inherent merit than mere distance from, and therefore forgetfulness of, the things that now disquiet the non-committed, and whose forbidding power is placed in the temporary vibrating of a nerve, rather than in the nature of the act or course itself? And does this oblivion, produced by a trench-like hiding of our needs, argue God's oblivion, and the annihilation of these now distressing features of our case, all because our nerves are so to trouble us?

We cannot suppose that this is so. And therefore we must acknowledge that we find ourselves at a crisis in the natural progress of our religious convictions.

On plank sinks under us. There is nothing in sight, but a thing with a rather

flavor, same, and that is, the possible effectiveness of works of *supererogation*

Under all ordinary circumstances we should be impelled to give this idea an unqualified rejection; but the present circumstances are *extraordinary*, for the *times*. Can we make that argument stand up at the moment, even to our own satisfaction, which would maintain that the delinquent of to-day whose shortcomings are so keenly felt by him, may hope to wipe out these debts by a not merely perfect faithfulness for the future, but by a faithfulness (if we can conceive the word thus used) over and above what is perfect? Can we find it within ourselves to offer, even to ourselves, the expressed hope, that by a self-invented devotion to self-chosen acts of spiritual drudgery, by a forced offering, that is, of loveless pain, we shall induce God to cancel the deeds of wrong, whose memory now forbids our receiving the holy Body and Blood broken and shed for the remission of sins?

Can we trust ourselves to such a hope as this?

§ 141.

In running away from the notion of a sinner, with his conscience-attested guilt fresh upon him, receiving the pardon of God through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, do we not clearly foresee the im-

possible region to which our hurried flight will lead us?

For if we refuse the Atonement of Christ, we must of necessity erect ourselves into individual Saviours, whose capacity for atonement by the human device of extra labor or of distasteful labor, it is easier for us to believe will prevail with God; though we cannot, as one has said, persuade ourselves that we believe we please God more by eating bitter aloes than by eating honey.

It is a case of choosing between two Saviours—between Christ, and ourselves; and when the one is God's way, and certain; and the other way our own, and unwarranted; is it not madness to think that there is really a choice for any of us?

It is, however, more within the lines of probability that reasoning does not usually go so far as this; that in fact with the many it stops short with that species of physical discord that is produced in both mind and body, by the idea of the meeting of sinners—real sinners, whose errors are not mere rhetorical things, but sully realities into which the full-blooded will itself has entered—and God Almighty.

To have heard of Jesus Christ means to know that God has stretched out His hand in mercy, and in mercy of the most merciful kind.

It is our heads, let it be noted, that have to do with the acceptance of this mercy; for it is to our heads that Christ ever appeals in all His teaching by illustration and parable; and yet we seem here to have passed the settlement of the whole momentous matter over to our feelings, with the implied agreement that their dictum shall be final and undebatable.

And what does all this mean, no matter how much we are impelled to it by the superior attractiveness of cordiality in religion over mere intellectual assent: what does it mean but this—we are ready to believe and trust anything, even the most fleeting, changeable thing *within ourselves*, in the way of assurance, rather than *the word of God*?

Is it not time for us to recognize to how great an extent our feelings have been permitted to rule us in this sovereign way; and that it is upon the promises of God through Jesus Christ that all our hopes in this world and the next depend, and not at all upon our variable bodily sensations?

§ 142.

So, then, we must send this non-participant of the Holy Communion back to his pew, to do the only due and proper work in order to produce fitness, namely, to think, to meditate whether he will accept (since he cannot buy) the free gift of God;

and whether his acceptance shall not be immediate, which is the more reverent, rather than delayed. For of all the certainties that nearly affect him, none is of more present force, than that he will never be more fit than he is now, in so far as the eye of heaven beholds him; and serious minds will not pay much heed to any other.

§ 143.

But if he be unfit himself, what can such a non-receiver understand to be the case of those who do go up and partake of this Sacrament?

Is it really true that they are all satisfied with their fitness, and the faultless character of their preparation?

It may be that many a man, concerned absorbingly with himself at this moment and who cannot see the way open to him to communicate, lets this summing up of the matter take from his mind a quite complete assent. And yet nothing could be more preposterous, than that these dutiful Christian men and women should either be thought, or believe themselves to be fit, to partake of the Holy Communion in the sense that they may be fit to sit at their neighbor's dinner table.

To have the solemn rite in which is embodied the ineffable pity of God upon ruined lost humanity, made the place for displaying spiritual excel-

lences—a parade ground for those that are whole, and who need not the physician—can this be Christianity? Surely if there is one phase of unfitness, more than another, calculated to utterly unfit and inhibit, it is the Pharisaism of thus imagining ourselves fit.

This will not do.

And now the mind of our interrogated worshipper, roused perhaps by this check, may be led to make a closer survey of those who go up to the altar-rails, and, in consequence, to change his ideas; but knowing how strongly the human heart entrenches itself here, we must not hastily, and without evidence, understand this change of opinion as effecting more for our parishioner than the subjective condition of the communicants, while it is the thinker himself we wish to see changed.

For amongst those who decorously kneel to receive the sacred Elements, does he not see a man whom he *knows* to be not only guilty of conduct belying the claims of a Christian, but a man positively dishonest, and even now clearly within the reach of the law—a man who, in short, if he had his deserts would be forced into his proper place behind the strong bars of a prison?

That such a man should presume to make one of that company and to receive the Sacrament, is

a shock to our parishioner's conception of true religion; and behold: a new access of self-commendation for his own decent restraint, is thus the only result of a comparison of courses with this bold obtruder.

§ 144.

Now it is worth while to notice that nothing can well go farther towards demonstrating that the first mentioned notion entertained of communicants, as being a parade of *very good* people—the flower of the flock, and sinners only by courtesy—is a conception very generally held, than does the anger of our typical parishioner, at the fact that one certainly known *to be* a sinner, should do such violence to Divine truth as to act upon its warranty and make himself one of this number. “This is a true saying, and worthy of all men to be received, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.”

§ 145.

“In the primitive Church there was a godly discipline, that at the beginning of Lent such persons as stood convicted of notorious sin were put to open penance, and punished in this world, that their souls might be saved in the day of the Lord; and that others admonished by their example, might be the more afraid to offend.

"Instead whereof (until the said discipline may be restored again, which is much to be wished)"*—What have we got? A liberty loving people, chafing under, and rejecting this action by the Church: only in order that each man may himself, without so much as a "*lettre de cachet*," be jury, judge, and jailer to his brother. And the brother, aware of the existence of this merciless tribunal, in ninety-nine case out of a hundred protects himself from its rigors, by keeping well out of its reach and severely apart from the procession to the throne of mercy. Only the hundredth has the courage to run the gauntlet and receive that mercy!

§ 146.

But what of this black sheep, whose actual case (since all that has been alleged against him is possible), we may take as fairly enough stated?

The first thing to be said of the matter is, of course, ready to hand in the words of our Lord Himself: "Judge not and ye shall not be judged, for with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged."

This command admits of no dallying with the temptation to try, sentence, and hang a brother sinner; our thorough unfitness for which offices,

* Commination Service.

the dealings of our Blessed Lord with certain persons in the gospel history, strikingly set forth.

If that maiden who, in the hall of the high priest's palace, heard a suspected follower of Jesus of Nazareth, with blasphemous vehemence deny any connection or sympathy with Jesus, had stood by on the morning of St. Peter's resistless sermon which added three thousand souls to the Church, and recognized in his fervid utterance the same voice which she had heard raised in a coward's unhallowed disavowal of his Friend and Master, she would, not unnaturally, have thought such a man most unfitted for the preacher's office, and the guardian of immortal souls; and in thinking so, she would doubtless be followed by the vast majority of humanity, and *especially* and with keenest aggressiveness by *godless Christians*—a tendency which is full of meaning.

And yet the Saviour of the world thought differently, and so very differently, that it was with full Divine approval, and with Divine aid, that St. Peter triumphed so gloriously that day.

§ 147.

No, the Church of God is, and we cannot too faithfully remember it, not a parade ground, but a giant hospital; and like the hospital—her own begotten child—she does not withhold her

succor until the magistrate's "not guilty" gives her permission to extend it. Jesus Christ our Saviour is the Great Physician, and we all know His methods, no matter how bad our memory may seem to be at times.

§ 148.

When all is said about our neighbor that can be said, it means this: that his disease is merely *not ours*; but we all need the aid which the Church was Divinely established and equipped to give us, that is, to administer. How irrational of us, then, to wait until we completely recover and until our neighbor recovers, so to speak, before we consent to occupy and let him occupy a cot in the great ward: "Judge Not"!

And here our parishioner, chafing at the daring profanation of a man who is a sinner indeed, taking advantage of that one and only help for sinners, is led to inquire of the Bible for a full list of the denunciations it utters against this palpable consecration.

He remembers a verse, for one of our Prayer Book exhortations* at Holy Communion gives it considerable prominence: it is St. Paul's words to the Corinthian converts, "He that eateth and

* This exhortation is omitted from the American Prayer Book.

drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not considering the Lord's body." This one passage is enough for his purpose: it soothes his mood by the full sanction it gives to his righteous indignation.

§ 149.

It would be a matter of profound and pathetic interest to know how many timid, hungering souls in our churches, have been chained to their seats by that one text, as effectually as iron links could bind them. God, in His infinite mercy, free them! For to not one of them, it may safely be said, does that dread warning apply, and, rightly understood, it gives no countenance to the indignation of the offended brother.

The circumstances under which the stern reproof, of which it is a portion, was delivered, were exceptional in the extreme, as will be seen, and are never likely to recur.

§ 150.

But first, this word "unworthily," if taken out of its particular context here, and generally used without the limitations of that context, becomes actually prohibitive of all human participation in the Holy Communion; and thus would do that holy Sacrament more injury than that from

which St. Paul is anxious to protect it at the hands of unseasoned disciples in Corinth: for who, as has been said above, but the really most unfit, could dare to think himself "worthy," in the sense of the word entertained by those whom it drives into the unequivocal *unworthiness* of turning their backs on their Saviour, and refusing the only helpfulness there is really between them and hell? "I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance."

"Worthily," as the word hangs before the minds of those who, all the while they are really hungering and thirsting after righteousness, yet from a misguided devoutness, turn away from the great Sacrament of Redemption, because of the grating presence of conscious sin—what is it? Let us try to define it, and set it down in black and white, that we may know its every feature, and, above all, whether every feature is of Christ's making.

§ 151.

Is it not this?—A miracle in the realm of mercy is required to reach men and women, who know but too well that they are sinners—very fellows of the man qualified for prison—and through faults, perhaps more sully than many of which the law takes count. A miracle is neces-

sary to reach the case of these; but that that miracle has not remained suspended between Heaven and earth, an unwrought and therefore unreal thing is the announcement which, though every church bell reiterates it, is still in the heart of a Christian land a practically undiscovered fact. By many it may be believed to be a possible reality, in so far as obliterating the sins of *other people* goes; but as it positively justifies a man's own sinful soul, before the God whom he has offended, it is believed by only the few.

"For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly." "For scarcely for a righteous man will one die, yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth His love toward us, in that *while we were yet sinners* Christ died for us" (Romans v. 6, 7, 8). And yet human ingenuity (call it rather unbelief) makes it necessary, in order to receive this amazing settlement with God and conscience, *that we do what is impossible*, namely, either make our sins unreal, or wipe them out ourselves, before we come to God. Belief in the forgiveness of *sins that are real sins*, through the blood of Jesus Christ, with the Church as God's own medium for extending this forgiveness to the souls of men and women (who are not

perhaps all conscious that they are hungering for it)—this is the one thing the yearning world cannot bring, as its only legitimate product, to the great settlement. The most it can do is to acknowledge that, personally, it is not of the “worthy”; and for the rest, trust to a drifting policy, and a vague sense of the general mercifulness of the future.

Therefore those who partake “worthily,” are those who have done with sin; *i.e.*, those who have in some way throttled it before presuming to come to their Saviour’s feet. In a word, those who have found for themselves another name under Heaven whereby we may be saved.

Let every man, whose individuality goes to make up this huge bulk of honest blunderers, and who, all the while he acknowledges his sins, and honestly desires their remission, turns from his “hope and sure relief,” for reasons and reasoning such as this, demand of himself as he walks out of church, and away from the Body given and the Blood shed for the remission of sins, this pertinent question: *Do I know what Christianity means?*

§ 152.

We only speak of one class of people, and our mistake is great if they are not unquestionably the major portion of those qualified by Confirmation

for partaking of the Holy Communion, namely, those who are ill at ease because of their sinfulness; or in other words, those who are not enjoying the highest and truest happiness for which God has given them capacity, and who consequently yearn, in any of the many degrees and phases of yearning, for their Heavenly Father's favor.

These are they to whom the dread words of the apostle to the communicants at Corinth, *do not apply*.

And now let us explain the circumstances which called forth these words and rendered them suited to only one occasion, and that, thank God, buried deep down beneath the weight of eighteen centuries and more.

§ 153.

In the early ages of the Church, there was, connected with the Lord's Supper, a religious meal, called *Agape*, or Love-feast; because it was a liberal collation of the rich to feed the poor.

"St. Chrysostom gives this account of it, deriving it from Apostolic practice: he says, the first Christians had all things in common, as we read in the Acts of the Apostles; and when that ceased, as it did in the apostles' time, this came in its room, as an efflux, or imitation of it. For though the rich did not make all their substance common,

yet upon certain days appointed, they made a common table: and when their service was ended, and they had all communicated in the holy Mysteries, they all met at a common feast; the rich bringing provisions, and the poor, and those who had nothing, being invited, they all feasted in common together.”*

Dean Alford says: “The ancient Christians partook of the Supper of the Lord, not before this feast, as Chrysostom states, but during and after it, as shown by the institution, by the custom of the Passover, by the context here (I. Cor. xi. 20), and by the remnant of the ancient custom and its abuse until forbidden by the Council of Carthage. These Love-feasts were commonly held in the church for the first three centuries, as we learn from Bingham, who says that such abuses were sometimes committed in them that the Council of Laodicea, not long after, made a law against having them in the church, forbidding any to eat, or spread tables in the house of God, or the church. . . .

“But the custom was too inveterate to be rooted out at once; and, therefore, we find by St. Austin’s (St. Augustine’s) answer to Faustus the

* Bingham’s *Antiquities of the Christian Church*, Bk. XV., Chap. vii. 6.

Manichee, that they were still kept in the church (*circ.* 400 A. D.); for whereas Faustus objected two things against them: (1) That they were but the spawn of the Gentile banquets, turned into Christian feasts; and (2) That the Catholics were used to make themselves drunk in them in the Memorials of the martyrs; St. Austin rejects the first charge as a mere calumny, telling him, 'that the end of their *agape* was only to feed the poor with flesh, or the fruits of the earth;' but the second charge he owns in part as true, that the people still held these feasts in the church, and that some excess was committed in them."

St. Ambrose at Milan prohibited all kinds of feasting in the church. In France it was prohibited by the second Council of Orleans, 541.

Yet for all this there were some remains of it in the seventh century, when the Council of Trullo was obliged to reinforce the canon of Laodicea against feasting in the church under pain of excommunication.*

§ 154.

This outlines the history in the Church throughout the world, of this religious meal in connection with the Lord's Supper.

The Holy Spirit, animating and guiding the

* See Bingham, Bk. XV.

Church, led her, early in her career, to cut the *agape* clean off from the Holy Communion; and, though St. Paul says, "Is any hungry among you, let him eat at home," she has ever since wished her children to preclude all possibility of unbecomingness, by reverently partaking of this holy food before any other.

It was this religious meal, then, in connection with which the abuses arose which called for the apostle's sharp rebuke and warning. The Holy Communion was celebrated during or after it.

The history of this custom of the early Christians shows that it was smirched by excess everywhere, from Lyons to Jerusalem. But the fulmination which the *Agape* in its lowest and worst abasement called forth, is surely obsolete now, when the possibility of such abuses has been eradicated from the Church for a millennium or more.

§ 155.

But it may be said that a particular case, even though it may never be likely to recur, may, in things Divine, call forth an authoritative deliverance on the general action of the law, as it not unfrequently does in human issues.

St. Paul, in his pronouncement upon this matter, may therefore not unnaturally rise, as our Lord often does in His teaching, from the letter

to the spirit of that "unworthiness" in participants of the Holy Eucharist, which means their damnation.

But with regard to this position, there are two pertinent observations to be made: (1) St. Paul's own words or actions must be his interpreters here, as nobody may dare to take the liberty of deciding this point, but the apostle himself; and (2) if St. Paul's subsequent words and actions testify that he has here left the region of Corinthian misdemeanor, and uses the words "worthily" and "unworthily" in a general way, leaving ordinary, wholesome, human consciousness to be the judge of its own worthiness or unworthiness to eat and drink of the Body and Blood of the Lord; then, as already remarked above, the apostle has used his great authority to cut off Christ our Saviour absolutely from the race; for no man living may dare to advance to the reception of the Holy Eucharist.

The remission of sins, for the effecting of which that Blood was shed and that Body broken, must therefore wait till some power, not Christ's, obliterates these sins, before Christ remits or forgives them.

But what testimony do St. Paul's subsequent or other words and actions bear in the matter? The fact as will appear, is indisputably clear, that

St. Paul, in the First Epistle to the Corinthians, was busy with the lofty task proper and peculiar to the founder of an apostolic Church, namely, the setting up of the standards of right in the community.

He was striving to establish in the Hellenic mind an ordinary, present-day, Christian, public opinion. The sin with which the apostle was dealing, and which evokes his condemnation here, was unlike the sins which keep tender consciences away from the Holy Communion nowadays, in that (1) it was not, by anybody, thought to be sin; and (2) it was committed after the Church had assembled, and during the public worship itself. This was how and where the damnation was such a real possibility.

§ 156.

The individual sinfulness which each of these early disciples brought to the Holy Communion, as the condition of his soul in the sight of God, St. Paul does not once mention, or refer to in any way in connection with the Holy Eucharist.

It was distinctly a matter of the conception and administration of the ordinances, as we may see, by setting together the second and the seventeenth and some following verses of the eleventh chapter of this epistle (I. Cor.): "Now I praise you.

brethren, that you remember me in all things and keep the ordinances as I delivered them to you" (verse 2). "Now in this, that I declare unto you, I praise you not, that ye come together not for the better, but for the worse. . . . When ye come together therefore into one place, this is not to eat the Lord's Supper, for in eating everyone taketh before other his own supper, and one is hungry and another is drunken."

§ 157.

The whole thing is made clear by a reference to the times, wherein the perilous likeness which this now long abandoned meal bore to the temple orgies (at least in the way the victualing was done, and some other particulars) made restraint by men who had never known either the meaning of restraint, or the immorality of neglecting it, almost an impossibility.

The glimpse of a temple feast which we get from Socrates, whose clean outline does not include the unspeakable excesses of every kind that befouled it, makes us think at once of the Church in Corinth in the year of the epistle, A. D. 57.

Socrates observed that of those who came to the feast, some brought but little meat; while others brought a large quantity, used to order

the waiter either to set the least dish before the company, or to distribute to each a portion of it. Those therefore who brought much were ashamed, both to not partake, like the rest, of what was set equally before all, and also to not reciprocate the courtesy with their own victuals. They therefore were obliged to set their food also before the company, and thus no one had more than those who brought least; a device which curbed those who were given to extravagant outlay for their delicacies (*Xen. Mem. Bk. iii. 14*).

We have now to fill in this unobjectionable outline with something of the body it possessed, and for which Corinth was notorious: to do which, we must remember that our civilization to-day owes all its decencies to the Church.

The whole heathen Roman Empire was saturated with vice, and knew nothing in any way approaching to the morality which now wholesomely leavens public sentiment.

Throughout this world in St. Paul's time Greece was proverbial for its licentiousness and debauchery, while, within Greece itself, Corinth was infamous as the focus of these proclivities. The temple of Venus—the richest and most sumptuous the world anywhere erected to that goddess, and which housed over a thousand priest-

esses of loose character—was the centre and inspiration of Corinthian social life.

Unbridled profligacy not only reared its crest unchallenged in Corinth, but reared it, to be crowned with the highest kind of religious consecration.

The apostle's own picture of heathen corruption, which he gives us in the first chapter of the epistle to the Romans, was drawn in Corinth, and as to time, something less than a year after his writing this first letter to the Corinthian Christians, wherein the visit is promised.

§ 158.

This was the material, then, on which St. Paul had to stamp Christian ideals, and out of which he was to make saints.

At the time of receiving this epistle (I. Cor.) the congregation at Corinth had had but five short years of Christianity. Eighteen months of this, St. Paul spent with them: first laboring to collect them together after his original congregation of alien Jews had turned from him, and then instructing them as he thought wisest. The rest of the time, except during short, unrecorded, but probable visits, they were in the hands of teachers who sought to undermine St. Paul's influence; a mishap

to them which must have greatly hindered any deepening of impressions distinctly Christian.

Even the great apostle's own teaching must necessarily have been, for the most part, positive Christian doctrine, preached from the constant text of the apostles—"Christ and the Resurrection;" as no such men as they were could be held together by the uninviting prospect of a gaping vacuum produced by abandoning sins that were felt to be no sins.

The nature of the seed which the apostle would sow must have been well demonstrated to them before they undertook the weeding process; so that the decalogue could not have been put in the van.

Thus, in St. Paul's absence, the rival teachers being present, and the tremendous pressure of environment all doing their work, it is not wonderful if the Corinthian Christians carried something of their ingrained *temple-of-Love* deportment into their new feast of love.

St. Paul warns them that to thus sully the fountain itself of our new life, is an awful desecration.

They have apparently totally misapprehended the nature and meaning of the Holy Eucharist; and so, with forbearance amazing to us, St. Paul once more recapitulates the details of the "institu-

tion" of the Sacrament, his purpose being to put them in the way of administering it properly, and winds up his treatment of this subject amongst the several his letter contains, with minatory language, none too strong, we should think, under the circumstances.

§ 159.

If this holy ordinance had been administered in Corinth, as it is everywhere administered to-day in the apostolic Church, there would have been no minatory passages connected with this august subject in the epistle to the Corinthians; and yet how must our suppositious parishioner have felt, had he been present to see those seasoned Corinthians going up to the Holy Communion?

Can we now put in this class of sinners—the class the apostle has in mind when he utters those warning words—for instance, the mother of a family, who, anxious about herself and her children, about the ways and means of life, and oppressed by a sense of her consequent forgetfulness of her duty to God from whom all good things around us are sent, is not really ready to draw near and cast her burden at her Lord's feet, but is withheld by the consciousness of some besetting sin—an irritable temper, perhaps—and how her many worldly duties have prevented her carrying out a

due course of preparation—a preparation in which it is just possible we place too much confidence?

§ 160.

In another part of the congregation, there is a young person who has, through the preceding week, made self-examination and special devotions instrumental in producing a satisfactory frame of mind in which to communicate. But that very morning, or it may be in the church itself, a flood of unholy thoughts has forced its way into the mind, and drowned righteous resolution in the fear that too much of self is framed into those thoughts; while the fact is not remembered that temptations—unholy thoughts—entered into the mind of Christ Himself, and that not the entering in, but the harboring and cherishing of these, “defile the man.”

Can we, with any approach to equity, class such cases as these in the same category with the indecencies of the Corinthian Christians, whom the apostle warns against unworthy partaking of the Holy Communion?

§ 161.

But may not we of to-day honestly believe what we have taken for granted, that both the ideal and the execution of a celebration of the Lord's Supper in our churches, are as free as possible

from anything like this ancient desecration; and that if it is still possible, here as everywhere, to spoil a good thing by overdoing it, there remains nothing to be added in the way of reverent observance?

Is it not just possible, now that the idea has been suggested, that our faults in this matter to-day lie in this opposite direction: that of an overwrought conception of the subject; and that by this conception, we go far towards making St. Paul an arch offender against the proclamation of the Saviour, "Whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in Me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea"?*

* "If it were not so (that sins of human frailty are no bar to Holy Communion) there could be no such thing as preparation for the Communion at all, and it would not only destroy frequent and daily Communion, but Communion in general, since no man lives without such infirmities; and if he were not to communicate till he had perfectly cured them, he must forever abstain from communicating, and never come at the Lord's table: which were at once to destroy the very ordinance itself, by making the qualifications for it impracticable, and rendering it impossible for any man to be perfectly and truly prepared for it. And it is to be feared that some in these later ages, by overstraining the point, have done this great disservice to religion, by obliging men to such a preparation for the Communion as is impracticable in itself; and frightening tender consciences from the holy ordinance under pretence of greater reverence for it: by which means it has sometimes happened, that they who perhaps have been the best prepared to receive it, have by needless scruples or terrors, been kept at the greatest distance from it" (Bingham, *Antiquities of the Christian Church*, Bk. XV., Chap. viii., Sec. 2).

§ 162.

The Christian does not swing like a pendulum across the chasms of difficulty which yawn before him in his course, but may be said more truly to cross them on a plank—and that plank is of the Saviour's placing.

We cannot shut our eyes and trust to inward feeling to guide us; but must keep our heads steady, and know wherein we trust.

Danger which is seen on the one side is not eliminated from the situation by throwing our weight heavily in the opposite direction.

The case in hand is one of these situations. On the one side we have the revolting Corinthian banquet instead of, or at least mixed up with, the Holy Eucharist; on the other side, the equally perilous offence just quoted in the words of our Lord. Between the two is there not room for the feet of those who trust the mercy of which assurance is given them by their Saviour?

The bride of Christ—the Church—re-echoes the policy of her Lord, "a bruised reed shall" she "not break," "smoking flax shall" she "not quench," for she transacts in His Divine Name, and by His Spirit.

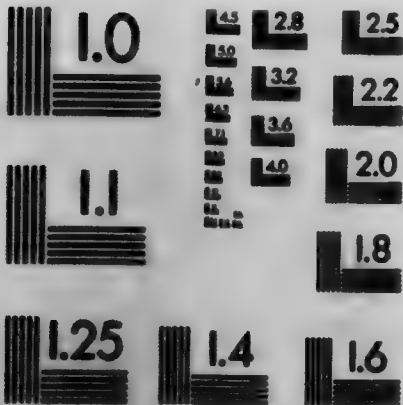
§ 163.

But there can be no doubt that the enormous



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pile of learned controversial works which this holy theme has occasioned, and the existence round about us in the world of the mighty sections of Christianity standing each aloof from the others, as living monuments of this conflict of opinions, have much to do with the small extent to which the Holy Eucharist is partaken of.

All this human war, to establish exactly how man receives that "*peace of God which passeth understanding*," shows forth one good thing at least (and the showing pitifully illustrates a thing we have glanced at in passing—the limits of our resourcefulness in true merit), namely, the minds of men have been, and continue to be, profoundly occupied with the words and deeds of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

The sentiments of Hooker are so nobly pertinent here, that I shall make no apology for esteeming them worthy to be transcribed at some length, and thus put in the forefront of the treatment of this part of our subject:

"These things considered (that the fathers only held a mystical communion), how should that mind which loving truth, and seeking comfort out of holy mysteries hath not perhaps the leisure, perhaps not the wit nor capacity to tread out so endless mazes, as the intricate disputes of this cause have let men

into—how should a virtuously disposed mind better resolve with itself than thus? Variety of judgments and opinions argueth obscurity in those things whereabout they differ.

“But that which all parts receive for truth, that which everyone having sifted is by no one denied or doubted of, must needs be matter of infallible certainty. Whereas therefore, there are but three expositions made of ‘This is My Body: *the first*—this is in itself before participation really and truly the natural substance of My Body, by reason of the co-existence which My omnipotent Body hath with the sanctified element of bread—which is the Lutheran interpretation; *the second*, this is itself and before participation the very true and natural substance of My Body, by force of that Deity which with the words of consecration abolisheth the substance of bread, and substituteth in the place thereof My Body, which is the Popish construction; *and last*: this hallowed food through concurrence of divine power is in verity and truth, unto faithful receivers, instrumentally a cause of that mystical participation, whereby as I make myself wholly theirs, so I give them in hand an actual possession of all such saving grace as My sacrificed Body can yield, and as their souls do presently need, this is to them

and in them My Body; of these three rehearsed interpretations the last hath in it nothing but what the rest do all approve and acknowledge to be most true, nothing but that which the words of Christ are on all sides confessed to enforce, nothing but that which the Church of God hath always thought necessary, nothing but that which alone is sufficient for every Christian man to believe concerning the use and force of this sacrament, finally nothing but that wherewith the writings of all antiquity are consonant, and all Christian confessions agreeable. . . . He which hath said of the one sacrament (Baptism) "Wash and be clean," hath said concerning the other likewise, 'eat and live.'

"If therefore without any such particular and solemn warrant as this is, that poor distressed woman coming unto Christ for health, could so constantly resolve herself, 'May I but touch the skirt of His garment I shall be whole (Matt. ix. 21), what moveth us to argue of the manner how life should come by bread, our duty being here but to take what is offered, and most assuredly to rest persuaded of this—that can we but eat we are safe?

"When I beheld with mine eyes some small and scarce discernible grain or seed whereof nature

maketh promise that a tree shall come, and when afterwards of that tree any skilful artificer undertaketh to frame some exquisite and curious work, I look for the event, I move no question about performance either of the one or of the other.

“Shall I simply credit nature in things natural, shall I in things artificial rely myself on art, never offering to make doubt, and in that which is above both art and nature, refuse to believe the Author of both, except He acquaint me with His ways, and lay the secret of His skill before me? Where God Himself doth speak, those things which either for height and sublimity of matter, or else for secrecy of performance, we are not able to reach unto, as we may be ignorant without danger, so it can be no disgrace to confess we are ignorant. Such as love piety will as much as in them lieth know all things that God commandeth, but especially the duties of service which they owe to God. As for His dark and hidden works, they prefer as becometh them, in such cases, simplicity of faith, before that knowledge, which, curiously sifting what it should adore, and disputing too boldly of that which the wit of man cannot search, chilleth for the most part all warmth of zeal, and bringeth soundness of belief many times into great hazard.

“Let it therefore be sufficient for me, present-

ing myself at the Lord's table, to know what there I receive from Him, without searching or enquiring of the manner how Christ performeth His promise; let disputes and questions—enemies to piety, abatements of true devotion, and hitherto in this cause but over patiently heard—let them take their rest; let curious and sharp-witted men beat their heads about what questions themselves will, the very letter of the word of Christ giveth plain security that these mysteries do as nails fasten us to His very Cross, that by them we draw out, as touching efficacy, force and virtue, even the blood of His gored side; in the wounds of our Redeemer we there dip our tongues, we are dyed red both within and without, our hunger is satisfied and our thirst forever quenched; they are things wonderful which he feeleth, great which he seeth, and unheard of which he uttereth, whose soul is possessed of this Paschal Lamb, and made joyful in the strength of this new wine; this bread hath in it more than the substance which our eyes behold, this cup, hallowed with solemn benediction, availeth to the endless life and welfare both of soul and body, in that it serveth as well for a medicine to heal our infirmities and purge our sins, as for a sacrifice of thanksgiving; with touching it sanctifieth, it enlighteneth with belief, it truly conform-

eth us unto the image of Jesus Christ; what these elements are in themselves it skilleth not, it is enough that to me which take them they are the body and blood of Christ, His promise in witness hereof sufficeth, His word He knoweth which way to accomplish; why should any cogitation possess the mind of a faithful communicant but this: O my God Thou art true, O my soul thou art happy!"*

§ 164.

Hooker, in this lofty passage, confines the teaching on the Lord's Supper to the three great schools—the Lutheran, the Roman, and the Anglican.

His design, to count the points of union, rather than to emphasize the differences amongst Christians, is characteristic. But whatever the possibilities for this were in Hooker's day and country, we Canadians of to-day know that we cannot for a moment exclude from the divisions of Christendom, a fourth school.

The teaching of Zwinglius is so deeply entrenched in Canadian Christianity that if we are to take actuality of practical belief, rather than some shadings of opinion—all however of the one color—we must at once set down the general belief of all our separated brethren of the sects, as neither

* *Ecclesiastical Polity*, Bk. V., Chap. 67, Sec. 12.

Roman, nor Lutheran, nor Anglican—but Zwinglian.

And yet, for the purposes of convenient, cogent illustration, it is extremely desirable that we should reduce them to three great divisions.

How shall we do this?

Let us first secure a plain statement of each of the four beliefs, and then see what two will, through the courtesy of the reader, best go under one head.

The beliefs are: (1) Transubstantiation. (2) Consubstantiation, (3) The Real Spiritual Presence, (4) The denial of any special presence altogether.

Transubstantiation is the doctrine of the Church of Rome. As stated by the school-authors and other more subtle reasoners among them, it means that in the Eucharist, after the words of consecration, the whole substance of the bread is converted into the substance of the Body of Christ, and the substance of the wine into the substance of His Blood; so that the bread and wine no longer remain, but the Body and Blood of Christ are substituted in their places. This, however, is said to be true only of the substance, not of the accidents. The accidents (such as color,

shape, taste, smell, consistence, etc.) all remain unchanged.

The substance, which is interior to, and not necessarily dependent on, those external accidents, is that which is converted.

Yet we are not to call it a mere spiritual change (though some of their writers have allowed even this), but the change is a real and miraculous conversion of the substance of the bread and wine into the very body of Christ which was born of the Blessed Virgin and crucified on Calvary.

Consubstantiation is considered to be the doctrine of Luther and the Lutherans. It differs from Transubstantiation in that it does not imply a change in the substance of the elements.

Those who hold this doctrine teach that the bread remains bread, and the wine remains wine; but that with and by means of the consecrated elements the true natural body and blood of Christ are communicated to the recipient.

The doctrine of a Real, Spiritual Presence is the Anglican doctrine, and was more or less the doctrine of Calvin and of many foreign reformers.

It teaches that Christ is really received by faithful communicants in the Lord's Supper: but that there is no gross or carnal, but only a spiritual

and Heavenly presence there, not the less real, however, for being spiritual.

It teaches therefore that the bread and wine are received naturally: but the Body and Blood of Christ are received spiritually. The result of which doctrine is this—it is bread, and it is Christ's Body. It is bread in substance, Christ in the Sacrament: and Christ is as really given to all that are truly disposed, as the symbols are: each as they can; Christ as Christ can be given; the bread and wine as they can; and to the same real purposes to which they were designed; and Christ does as really nourish and sanctify the soul, as the elements of the body.

The fourth opinion is that of Zwinglius, who taught that the Eucharist is a bare commemoration of the death of Christ: and that the bread and wine are mere symbols and tokens to remind us of His Body and Blood.*

§ 165.

Of these four beliefs it will be seen that the first and the second hold that the actual, literal interpretation of the words, "This is My Body," must be maintained, and thus that the communicant must receive the very Body and Blood, flesh

* These definitions, in order to avoid controversy, are taken from Bishop Harold Browne on the Thirty-Nine Articles.

and bone, of the crucified Redeemer in the Holy Eucharist—the one changing the substance of bread and wine into the sacred Flesh and Blood: the other giving the sacred Body and Blood, in, with, and under, ordinary bread and wine.

These two beliefs, of Transubstantiation, and Consubstantiation, we may therefore most fitly join under the one heading of the more familiar Transubstantiation; and otherwise omit from our further consideration the doctrine of Consubstantiation: not indeed from any arrogant disrespect for the great and learned body which holds that reputable belief, but because the number of these Christians in Canada is not large.

§ 166.

We shall thus have to deal with exactly three great divisions of Christianity, and their three respective conceptions of the meaning of the Saviour's words, "This is My Body:" namely, that which maintains the carnal, that which maintains the spiritual, and that which maintains the negative interpretation of the Divine words.

Every communicant of the Church of England, as he walks up the aisle of his church to receive the Holy Communion, knows that these three conceptions of the Lord's Supper are held, each by

honest, God-fearing Canadian brothers, who are every whit as enlightened as himself.

The Romanist believes that the priest's words turn the common elements of bread and wine into the very bleeding Body of the Lord: but we who think differently must acknowledge that nobody can charge him with undervaluing what is offered.

The separated brother of the sects, believes that the prayers of himself and his minister produce their effect upon the recipient only, and make no change whatever upon the bread and wine.

Thus, what is offered him, he values at the exact value of bread and wine.

Between these two logical positions then—Christ is present bodily in the Holy Eucharist; and Christ in the Holy Eucharist is not present in any manner—where is the standing-room for the Anglican belief of a spiritual Presence, since the sacred Elements, bread and wine, are not spiritual, but substantial?

§ 167.

All agree that bread and wine are laid upon the altar or holy table, and in each of the three communions, the celebrant or officiating minister offers solemn prayers. When the prayers are ended, two of the three believe that a change has been effected in the Elements, such at least as to make

these Elements not to be confounded with the ordinary unconsecrated bread and wine held in reserve (though occasionally a slovenly Churchman will let crumbs fall and be ashamed to stoop and pick them up).

The third believer that the prayers have produced no difference in the nature and value of the bread and wine placed on the holy table, from that which remains in supply.

But what is the change?

The startling, climacterical discourse of our Lord in the Synagogue of Capernaum (John vi. 48-60), and then a year later, the setting of the torch to the tinder of that Divine deliverance, by the institution of the Lord's Supper on the eve of His crucifixion for the world's redemption, all make the Churchman recoil from the vacuous thought, that all this is mere rhetoric; while on the other hand, the alternative that the quivering flesh of the Redeemer is offered, repels him.

God guide our judgment! We all feel that it is indeed the Body of the Lord—as the Saviour unmistakably says that it is. We must pause for a moment therefore to quiet our honest and devout perplexity, which cannot be divinely intended to overwhelm us.

Is it only in religion that a thing may be itself,

and yet very much more than its apparent self? Is there nothing in the ordinary experiences of life, that affords anything like a parallel? For our perplexity will cease to be devout, the moment it wears the look of stupidity.

Our condition as we come to the altar rails to partake of the Holy Eucharist, is described in a way that well suits us, when we are called debtors, and debtors who have nought wherewith to pay.

We come, then, as very bankrupts, when we accept that timely invitation, "Come unto Me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest"—rest from our load of debt.

We seek the gracious benefaction of one who can pay for us to the uttermost, and we are sure He will be as good as His word, which He has verily given us.

§ 168.

How like anxious waiters in the outer office of a princely capitalist who has bidden us apply to him if difficulties should overtake us!

Our affairs and the desperateness of their condition drive us to seek him, and he does not avoid us. He meets us like a brother. Our story is soon told; and at once the faithful clerk receives his orders.

The cheque book is taken down. The intention of our friend is duly written on the figured paper, the servitor's work is faithfully completed. The meagre slip of paper is torn from its fellows by the clerk and dutifully placed before his employer, whose eye sees that all is done scrupulously according to his instructions by this his officer, and then, to the valueless bit of paper, he graciously sets his signature, producing scarcely any noticeable alterations in the appearance of the thing, and hands the slip to us.

What! A thousand dollars over and above what we asked for, or needed! (God protect us from ingratitude, *the human failing.*) No great banker on earth but knows and bows to that name.

With that cheque in our trembling hands therefore, and with a soul responding to the splendid deed, we turn on the one hand to our Roman brother, to show him our good fortune.

He sees, acknowledges the reality of the help, and stands aghast at *the miracle.*

It is gold, gold, he says; there is no manner of doubt about it. Let it but fall, and notwithstanding its appearance, the ring of the true precious metal will be heard—the copious tumble of massive wealth.

On the other hand we turn to our sectarian

brother, and show him the cherished possession we have received, and which was given and accepted with the meaning that it should meet the crisis.

To him, as he carefully examines it, it is a very dear and lovable souvenir, honoring to us who are permitted to retain it from such a giver; but gold it is not, nor of more real intrinsic value than any of its fellows that remain untorn from the cheque book: but it bears a unique and touching message of sympathy, for which we ought to be duly grateful; and as human nature is prone to remissness both as to the feeling and the expression of gratitude, we must be sure at least to show a proper appreciation of this cordial and inspiring good wish from such a friend. The form it is conveyed in must not of course be pressed into meaning that is more than merely figurative.

§ 170.

It cannot be said that the remarks of either add anything to our joy. We know that there has been no miracle. We are sure that there is wealth, even beyond our great needs, in the modest-looking slip of paper we have received; for we have no desire, it is not in us, to affront by doubt the reality of the friendship extended, or of the power claimed.

We were debtors—bankrupts, who, having re-

ceived a gracious and most true invitation to make the reality of our need and distress the occasion of a visit in person to our friend, have now the peace and comfort of complete release from impending ruin.

And now, let us return to our pew in church. We have humbly confessed our sins, made our story of debt and penury known.

The priest proceeds to the prayer of consecration, for is he too, not the *clerk* (there according to the expressed will and changeless plan of his Divine Master), of whom all who prepare cheques of beneficence at their master's commands, are but the meagre-types?

The prayer of consecration is reverently and solemnly concluded, and then the friendship of the Friend of friends is tested.

Every step in that hallowed office—which has descended in its immutable outline from the days of St. John in Ephesus to the present, every step having been taken in obedience to the still unwritten word of the Saviour—that Saviour, Master, Friend, now disappointing no well-placed hope, signs the bare elements, and, without change, they are changed, and changed upon the word, and by the act, of Him who will be our Judge, and whose

assured acceptance hereafter of His own sign-manual can cause us no solicitude.

§ 171.

And so our debts are paid. The *real* sinner's account is squared with his God. And our conception and estimate of sins and sinners, right everywhere else, are wrong here; for the world's dictum, which is, at its best, only a strained echo of conscience, must not be heard in this presence.

If we have made the world's ideals, and decisions, our most venerated canons of action in our daily life, it will be a difficult matter for us to abandon this regime now.

But neither conscience itself, nor conscience grotesquely mirrored (which is the world), dare any more than ourselves preside at this tribunal before which we now stand, and, thanks be to God the Saviour and Redeemer, stand acquitted.

§ 172.

It matters not what the wit of the whole world can say, nor what all the inexorable laws of conscience may demand, our experience shatters into fragments all their stern and really flawless logic, and every mouth, when not opened in praise and adoration of this sovereign and arbitrary mercy, must be shut in dutiful, self-obliterating silence.

For either we are free and sinless, as Adam before the fall; or God is made a liar.* "This is My Body which is given for you—Take eat; This is My Blood which is shed for you and for many, *for the remission of sins.* Drink ye all of it."

§ 173.

"I give them in hand," says Hooker, "an actual possession of all such saving grace as My sacrificed Body can yield, and as their souls do presently need, this is to them, and in them My Body."

But this is from the side of God, and, to Churchmen at least, admits of no doubt as to its fulness of favor.

On the side of man, on the acquitted sinner's side, however, the world, being only renounced in its worst and most evil manifestations, and not renounced equally in its noblest ideals (since these are in opposition to the word and assurance of the Judge of all the earth), still fetters the feet of even the best, who will not readily leave this goodly vessel, which has carried them so long, to walk on the water with Christ.

The world's loud loyalty to conscience now, like that of the Jews to Cæsar in order to crush Christ, echoes in the minds of many faithful communicants, and drives away that "peace which

* "He that believeth not God, hath made Him a liar" (I. John v. 10).

passeth understanding," and which follows forgiveness and ought to be theirs.

If it do not quite attain to making them tacitly charge God with unfaithfulness, it holds them in a stupified thrall, somewhere between this awfulness, and the too delightful alternative of forgiveness, absolute and unreserved.

Its influence—the influence of this world-conscience—is inimical and tremendous. It makes men who go down from the communion rails freed by God's good grace, to be as heavily chained culprits still, before its ideals; and for all these—her children, who are thus unable to leave their fetters—the Church prays in the words, "Grant we beseech Thee, Almighty God, to Thy faithful people, pardon *and peace*: that they may be cleansed from all their sins, and serve Thee *with a quiet mind*, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen."

Indeterminateness, indecision then, in the mind of a recipient of the Holy Communion, as to how he stands before God, means, in effect, abandonment of Christ; for the words of the Saviour are true here, "He that is not with Me is against Me;" and the whole energies of our being must be directed towards escape from it by shipping our eternal destiny with Christ, in the secure words, "Given . . . shed for the remission of sins."

§ 174.

It may be profitable to enter more closely into the feelings and fortunes of one who waits as we have suggested, to claim from a powerful friend a promised rescue from financial difficulties.

The applicant, in the nature of the case, must have good warranty for venturing on so bold a course—warranty as good as the word and the honor of his friend. This buoys and stays him.

Then it was real and dire need that was generously mentioned as a fit cause of appeal; and this condition he is painfully certain his circumstances amply satisfy.

The aid offered as a promise, and gratefully accepted when offered, was to be clearly adequate, and no limits set.

(1) If this poor man, therefore, receive less than his sore needs demand, we must, perforce and in charity, conclude that some intervening disaster has crippled the resources of the rich friend.

(2) If the seeker have to return to his difficulties without obtaining any money gift whatever, then the least severe thing we can think, is that the reverse which has overtaken the wealthy man's bank account has turned out to be his complete and utter ruin.

(3) One more supposition (and the hypothesis is anything but inviting) : if the wealthy promiser evince the deliberate intention, unurged by any change in his original opulent circumstances, to keep his promise by pious words instead of pious deeds here, and if this esteemed and trusted benefactor actually say at last, "Depart in peace, be thou warmed," etc., making no further attempt to extend those things that be needful—this wretched mockery of friendship surely deserves the contempt of all honest-minded men.

Thus it comes to be seen, that we are not permitted, as before we thought possible, to receive the cheque-like message of sympathy from this man of means, lest we become abettors of his hypocrisy.

We conclude, therefore, that the negative interpretation is to be shunned, as under the circumstances revolting and impious; and certainly as no improvement upon that against which it is a violent protest, namely, the carnal view.

Of the Roman, or carnal view, we may say, we *will not have it*; but of this other we must say, we *dare not have it*, for the Benefactor in this parable is the Lord Jesus Christ, the Saviour, who *has* given His word to us, as He has given His life for us; and who cannot fail, as He cannot lie.

§ 175.

On the other hand, our Romanist brother, whose realistic mind has driven the sectarian Christian to his dreadful extremity of divergence, does not, as we have seen, undervalue what the Lord so solemnly, and, knowing our plight, so confidently offers.

Our inability, however, to concede that any cheque, in order to be real and valid, must be written on gold, brings us, according to the discipline of our sister the Church of Rome, into the condition of the damned; and with the damned and the heretical, faithful Roman Catholics may not mingle.*

* The Rev. Henry Kittson, M.A., rector of Christ Church Cathedral, Ottawa, has pointed out to the writer that Dean Hook, in his *Lives of the Archbishops of Canterbury*, throws out in a couple of lines, an idea somewhat like that of the cheque here used as an illustration of the Anglican position. The writer, however, has no acknowledgments to make except to Mr. Kittson, for the courtesy of pointing out an interesting coincidence, so far as it is such. The illustration which a cheque may give to the Church of England's interpretation of our Lord's words, "This is My Body," came to the writer's mind while awaiting a subscription to the building fund of a church he was erecting, and which subscription was given by cheque. The donor—a well-known Churchman of Ottawa, and a Senator lately deceased—whose signature, not difficult for the bankers to make out, though from its remarkable paucity of letters was not so easy for others to understand, by his touch to the paper, gave light as well as money to his friend.

THE END.

APPENDIX.

NOTE A.

[See page 22.]

"Et une preuve que je vous dis vrai, c'est que si, pour revenir à Dieu, il ne devoit vous en coûter que de soumettre votre raison à des mystères qui nous passent; si la vie chrétienne ne vous offroit point d'autres difficultés que certaines contradictions apparentes, qu'il faut croire sans les pouvoir comprendre; si la foi ne proposoit point de devoirs pénibles à remplir; si, pour changer de vie, il ne falloit pas renoncer aux passions les plus vives et aux attachements les plus chers; si c'étoit ici une affaire purement d'esprit et de croyance, et que le cœur et les penchans n'y souffrissent rien, vous n'auriez plus de peine à vous rendre: vous regarderiez comme des insensés ceux qui mettroient en balance des difficultés de pure spéculation, qu'il n'en coûte rien de croire, avec une éternité malheureuse qui, au fond, peut devenir le partage des incrédules. La faïe ne vous paroît donc difficile que parce qu'elle règle les passions, et non parce qu'elle propose des mystères. C'est donc la sainteté de ses maximes qui vous révolte, plutôt que l'incompréhensibilité de ses secrets: vous êtes donc corrompu; mais vous n'êtes pas incrédule." (Massillon, Tome Premier, p. 95. A. Paris, 1838.)

NOTE B.

[See page 24.]

"No wonder that the devil, in order to diffuse idolatry, has blotted out among all heathen nations the recognition of *Creation*. The true doctrine of *Creation* is the proper refutation of all idolatry." (Roos, cited by Stier and quoted by Alford, N. T. 2, p. 196.)

NOTE C.

[See page 43.]

We leave theologians to settle the metaphysics of the Fall. *Their* business may be to know how we *became* sinners; *our* first, great, immediate business is to know how we are to *cease* to be so; how we are to be saved.

Leave those who have reached the land to settle how, and on what reef, the vessel struck; the question with us who cling to the shrouds, or are battling with the surf, is, how to gain yonder blessed shore. In God's name, and by His help get the raging fire put out; and when the flames are quenched, will be the time to consider how they were kindled. Tie the bleeding artery, and when life is saved, find out how it was wounded—when you have plucked the drowning man from the water, and laid him on the bank, and the color flushes again on his cheek, and the pulse beats at his wrist, and speech returns to the blue and livid lips, then may you speculate on how he fell into the flood." (Guthrie; *Gospel in Ezekiel*, p. 89.)

NOTE D.

[See page 112.]

"Adam, you know, was created in the image and after the likeness of God; his frail and imperfect nature stamped with a Divine seal, was supported and exalted by an indwelling of Divine grace.

Impetuous passion did not exist in him, except as a latent element and a possible evil; ignorance was dissipated by the clear light of the spirit; and reason, sovereign over every motion of his soul, was simply subjected to the will of God. Nay, even his body was preserved from every wayward appetite and affection, and was promised immortality instead of dissolution. Thus he was in a supernatural state; and had he not sinned, year after year would he have advanced in merit and grace, and in God's favor, till he passed from Paradise to Heaven." (Newman: *Sermons to Mixed Congregations*, p. 352-3.)

NOTE E.

[See page 120.]

"Sir Thomas More setteth down the odds between us and the Church of Rome in the matter of works thus: 'Like as we grant them, that no good work of man is rewardable in heaven of his own nature, but through the mere goodness of God, that list to set so high a price upon so poor a thing; and that this price God setteth through Christ's passion, and for that also that they be his own works with us; for good works to Godward worketh no man, without God work in him; and as we grant them also, that no man may be proud of his works, for his imperfect working; and for that in all that man may do he can do no good, but is a servant unprofitable, and doth but his bare duty; as we, I say, grant unto them these things, so this one thing or twain do they grant us again, that men are bound to work good works, if they have time and power; and that whoso worketh in true faith most, shall be most rewarded: but then set they thereto, that all his rewards shall be given him for his faith alone, and nothing for his works at all, because his faith is the thing, they say, that forceth him to work well!'

"I see by this of Sir Thomas More, how easy it is for men of great capacity and judgment to mistake things written or spoken, as well on the one side as on another.

"Their doctrine, as he thought, maketh the works of man rewardable in the world to come through the mere goodness of God, whom it pleaseth to set so high a price upon so poor a thing; and ours, that a man doth receive that eternal and high reward not for his works, but for his faith's sake, by which he worketh: whereas in truth our doctrine is no other than that which we have learned at the feet of Christ; namely, that God doth justify the believing man, yet not for the worthiness of his belief, but for his worthiness which is believed, God rewardeth abundantly everyone which worketh, yet not for any meritorious dignity, which is, or can be, in the work, but through His mere mercy, by whose commandment he worketh.

"Contrariwise, their doctrine is, that as pure water of itself hath no savor, but if it pass through a sweet pipe, it taketh a pleasant smell of the pipe through which it passeth: so, although before grace received, our works do neither satisfy nor merit; yet after, they do both the one and the other. Every virtuous action hath then power in such sort to satisfy; that if we ourselves commit no mortal sin, no heinous crime, whereupon to spend this treasure of satisfaction in our own behalf, it turneth to the benefit of other men's release, on whom it shall please the steward of the house of God to bestow it." (Hooker: Keble's Edition—Sermon II., p. 669, 670, 671.)

"The strength of every building, which is of God, standeth not in any man's arms or legs; it is only in our faith, as the valor of Samson lay only in his hair. This is the reason, why we are so earnestly called upon to *clify ourselves in faith*.

"Not as if this bare action of our minds, whereby we believe the Gospel of Christ, were able in itself, as of itself, to make us unconquerable and invincible, like stones, which abide in the building forever, and fall not out.

"No, it is not the worthiness of our believing, it is the virtue of Him in whom we believe, by which we stand sure, as houses that are builded upon a rock. He is a wise man which hath builded his house upon a rock; for he hath chosen a good foundation, and no doubt his house will stand. But how shall it stand? Verily, by the strength of the rock which beareth it, and by nothing else. . . . For if thou boastest thyself of thy faith, know this, that Christ chose His apostles, His apostles chose not Him; that Israel followed not the rock, but the rock followed Israel; and that thou bearest not the root, but the root thee. So that every heart must this think, and every tongue must thus speak, 'Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us,' nor unto anything which is within us, but unto thy name only, only to thy name belongeth all the praise of all the treasures and riches of every temple which is of God. This excludeth all boasting and vaunting of our faith." (Hooker, Sermon VI., p. 857-8.)

NOTE F.

[See page 130.]

"I deal not with open and avowed vice. . . . I come among the amiabilities, the noblenesses, the stern and lofty virtues of our social life. It is *there* that the warfare against man's fancied perfection must be prosecuted, and the true nature of that one principle of Christian excellence which is yet to be the light and blessedness of heaven, vindicated against all its counterfeits.

"It is these virtues which the man of the world and the philosopher equally declare themselves unable to conciliate with the uncompromising denunciations of the gospel. It is these in which I find them most amply justified. The depravity of the world is just its forgetfulness, impatience, contempt of its God; the godless *excellences*, the unsanctified noblenesses of man, are the truest, the most awful proofs of fact.

"That the murderer, the adulterer, the thief, should disclaim subjection to his God is sad, but scarcely surprising; the depth, the universality of the rebellion, is seen in the independence of our very virtues upon God; in the vast sphere of human excellence into which God never once enters; in the amiability that loves all but God; in the self-devotion that never surrendered one gratification for the sake of God; in the indomitable energy that never wrought one persevering work for God; in the enduring patience that faints under no weight of toil except the labor of adoring and praising God.

"This it is, which really demonstrates the alienation of the world from its Maker, that its *best* affections should thus be affections to all but Him; that not the worst alone or the most degraded, but the best and loftiest natures among us, should be banded in this conspiracy to exile Him from the world He has made; that when He thus 'comes to His own,' 'His own' should 'receive Him not'; that He should have to behold the fairest things He has formed—kindness and gratitude and love—embracing every object but Himself; the loveliest feelings He has emplanting taking root, and growing and blossoming through the world, to bear

fruit for all but Him." (Archer Butler. *Sermons*, Vol. I., p. 140-1. Macmillan & Co.)

NOTE G.

[See page 182.]

"The second vicious principle was the right of compulsion assumed by the Romish Church: a right, however, contrary to the very nature and spirit of religious society, to the origin of the Church itself, and to its primitive maxims. A right, too, disputed by some of the most illustrious fathers of the Church—by St. Ambrose, St. Hilary, St. Martin—but which, nevertheless, prevailed and became an important feature in its history.

"The right is assumed of forcing belief, if these two words can stand together, or of punishing faith physically, of persecuting heresy, that is to say, a contempt for the legitimate liberty of human thought, was an error which found its way into the Romish Church before the beginning of the fifth century, and has in the end cost her very dear." (Guizot, *History of Civilization in Europe*, p. 98.)

NOTE H.

[See page 220.]

"I do not deny that this aspect has been given to the Sacrifice of Christ. It has been represented as if the majesty of Law demanded a victim: and so as it glutted its insatiate thirst, one victim would do as well as another—the purer and the more innocent the better. It has been exhibited as if Eternal Love resolved in fury to strike, and so as He had His blow, it mattered not whether it fell on the whole world, or on the precious head of His own chosen Son.

"Unitarianism has represented the Scriptural view in this way; or, rather, perhaps, we should say, it has been so represented to Unitarians—and, from a view so horrible, no wonder if Unitarianism has recoiled.

"But it is not our fault if some blind defenders of the truth, have converted the self-devotion of love into a Brahminical Sacrifice.

"If the work of redemption be defended by parallels

drawn from the most atrocious records and principles of Heathenism, let not the fault be laid upon the Bible.

"We disclaim that as well as they.

"It makes God a Caiaphas—it makes Him adopt the words of Caiaphas in the sense of Caiaphas. It represents Him in terms which better describe the ungoverned rage of Saul missing his stroke at David, who has offended, and in disappointed fury, dashing his javelin at his own son Jonathan." (F. W. Robertson. *Sermons, First Series*, pp. 136-7.)

NOTE I.

[See page 227.]

"The Lord's death is the perfect revelation of the sin of the world. It is not merely relative goodness that suffers: still less is it one party laid low by an opposite sect: He who now suffers the death of a malefactor is the incarnate Righteousness itself raised high above all parties. This death must therefore be described as the consummation of the world's unrighteousness.

"It is not merely an isolated act: all the sin previously developed in human history reaches, in this act, its highest culmination.

"To so deep a depth had history now sunk. that those very powers in Judaism and heathenism whose province it was to embody and maintain righteousness upon earth. those spiritual and secular powers unite to crucify the personal Righteousness itself.

"It is not only Caiaphas and Pilate who bring the Redeemer to the cross: spiritual principalities and powers are engaged in the work; on the one hand unbelieving Judaism the spirit of Pharisaism, idolizing itself in the letter of the law; and on the other hand, spirit-denying heathenism recognizing itself in the Cæsar of Rome as a god on earth.

"Had Caiaphas and Pilate and Judas never lived, those powers would nevertheless have brought Christ to the Cross.

"The death of the Lord Jesus is, therefore, the perfect manifestation of the world's sin and guilt. But this very death which seems to consummate the condemnation and perdition of the race, in reality atones for the sin of man-

kind; Golgotha's Cross, which seems to be set up for all history as a sign of the curse, is the symbol of salvation, the true 'tree of freedom' for all history. This is the deepest mystery of love displayed in the Atonement." (Martensen, *Christian Dogmatics*, p. 310, 311.)

NOTE J.

[See page 241.]

"It is as impossible for man to live as it is for man to be redeemed, except through vicarious suffering. The anguish of the mother is the condition of the child's life. His very being has its roots in the law of sacrifice; and from his birth onwards, instinctively this becomes the law which rules his existence.

"There is no blessing which was ever enjoyed by man which did not come through this.

"There was never a country cleared for civilization and purified of its swamps and forests, but the first settlers paid the penalty of that which their successors enjoy. There never was a victory won, but the conquerors who took possession of the conquest passed over the bodies of the noblest slain, who died that they might win." (F. W. Robertson. *Sermons, First Series*, p. 139.)

NOTE K.

"Any person or thing consecrated to God, or employed in His service, is said to be sanctified. Thus particular days appropriated to His service, the temple, its utensils, the sacrifices, the priests, the whole theocratical people, are called holy. Persons or things not thus consecrated, are called profane, common, or unclean. To transfer any person or thing from this latter class to the former, is to sanctify him or it. 'What God hath cleansed (or sanctified), that call not thou common' (Acts x. 15). . . . This use of the word is specially frequent in application to persons and communities. The Hebrew people were sanctified (that is, consecrated) by being selected from other nations and devoted to the service of the true God. They were, there-

fore, constantly called holy. All who joined them, or who were intimately connected with them, became in the same sense, holy. Their children were holy; so were their wives.

“‘If the first fruits be holy, the lump is also holy; and if the root be holy, so are also the branches’ (Rom. xii. 16). That is, if the parents be holy, so are also the children. Any child, the circumstances of whose birth secured it a place within the pale of the theocracy, or commonwealth of Israel, was, according to the constant usage of Scripture, said to be holy. In none of these cases does the word express any subjective or inward change. A lamb consecrated as a sacrifice, and therefore holy, did not differ in its nature from any other lamb.

“The priests or people, holy in the sense of set apart to the service of God, were, in their inward state, the same as other men. Children born within the theocracy, and therefore holy, were none the less conceived in sin, and brought forth in iniquity. They were by nature the children of wrath, even as others (Eph. ii. 3).” (Hodge. *Exposition of First Corinthians*, p. 115.)



